

Land at the Old Police House, Mill Street, Rocester, Staffordshire:

An Archaeological Watching Brief

(NGR: SK 11047 39289)



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Non-Technical Summary

During January and February 2007, Benchmark Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Dr. Richard Aldridge on land at The Old Police House, Mill Street, Rocester, Staffordshire (NGR: SK 11047 39289, Figure 1). The watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new surgery building on the site.

A previous archaeological evaluation carried out on the site by Birmingham Archaeology in August 2006, established the presence of Roman-British remains dating to the 2nd Century AD. Taking into consideration the results of the evaluation, the Archaeological Advisor to East Staffordshire Borough Council advised that an archaeological watching brief be carried as a condition attached to planning permission for the work (East Staffordshire Borough Council Planning Application Reference PA/30710/003).

The work recorded the remains of 3 linear features, 2 charcoal-rich clay surfaces, 2 pits, and 3 features of undetermined function. Most of the features and deposits contained pottery and ceramic material. The ceramic assemblage consisted of 75 sherds of late 1st Century to 2nd Century pottery, and 11 fragments of tegula. A small amount of animal bone was collected, along with 3 fragments of disarticulated human bone. A single un-stratified Roman coin of probable 2nd Century date was also discovered. Identified archaeological features were cut into a matrix of dark-brown clayey loam and gravel. The level of the natural ground surface was rarely identified during archaeological monitoring

The excavated features and deposits are broadly comparable to those recorded during the preceding controlled evaluation work carried out by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006. The remains on site are likely to represent an eastern section of the vicus identified to the west of the site (Ellis, forthcoming). The watching brief site straddles both the vicus and fort areas with the vicus extending further to the south. Within the wider vicus area there appear to be some distinction in the activities carried out, potential ritual activity to the south (Orton's Pasture), industrial activity to the west (Mill Street), and further industrial activity with animal husbandry to the north (Northfield Avenue). The remains on the Old Police House site correspond with the 3rd phase of the forts.

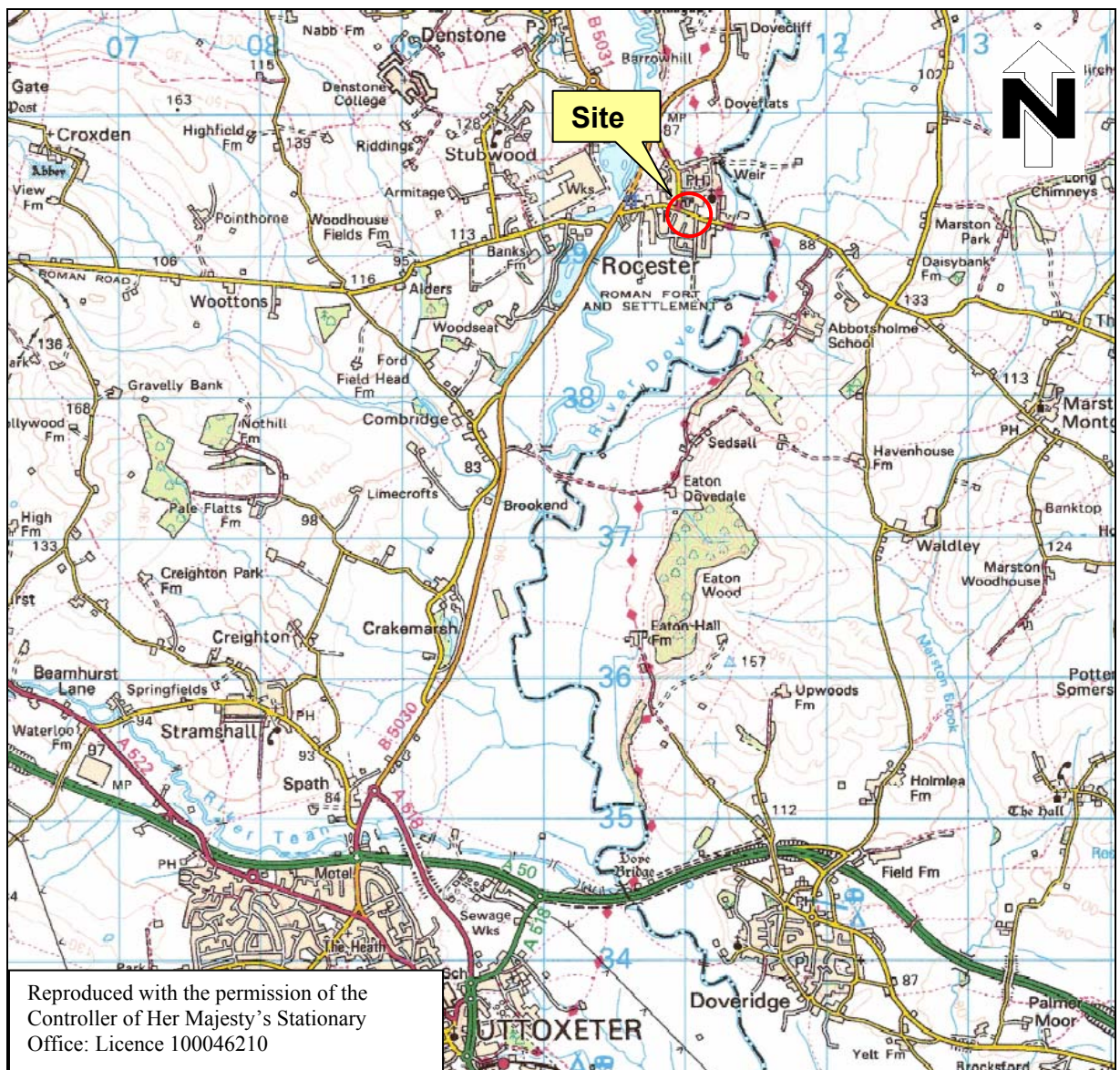


Figure 1: *General site location*

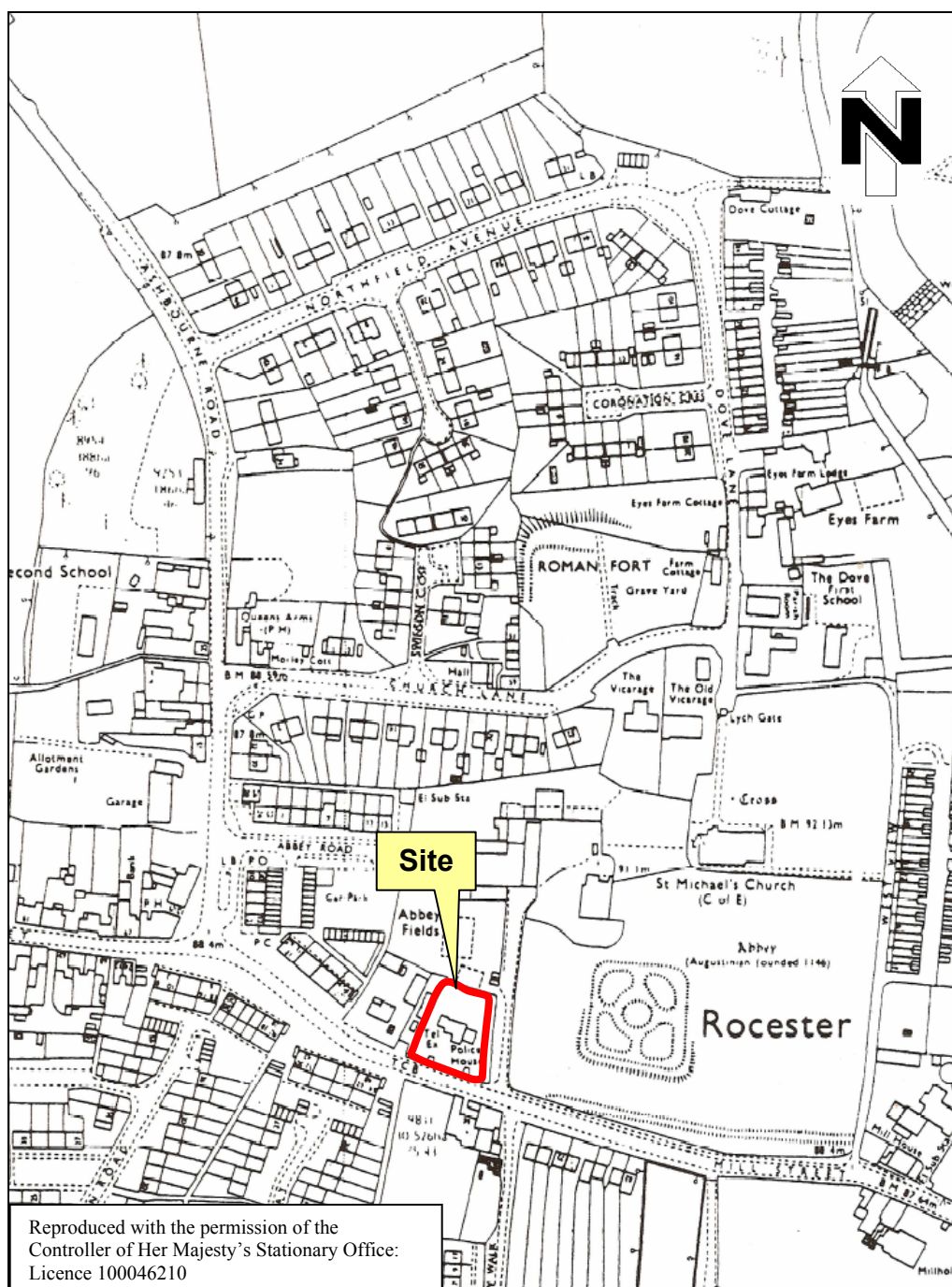


Figure 2: Site location (not to scale)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 During January and February 2007, *Benchmark Archaeology* carried out an archaeological watching brief on c. 0.13 hectares of land at the Old Police House, Mill Street, Rocester (SK 11047 39289, Figures 1 and 2). The watching brief was undertaken during the construction of a new surgery on the site. The archaeological work was recommended by Staffordshire County Council as a condition attached to planning permission (East Staffordshire Borough Council Planning Application Reference PA/00950/003). The known archaeological potential of Rocester is well demonstrated and numerous archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the town. A previous archaeological evaluation on the site, carried out by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006, had identified Romano-British remains dating to the 2nd Century AD (Colls and Hamilton 2006).
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a specification produced by Staffordshire County Council (Dean 2007). All stages of the project were conducted in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) ‘*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*’ (1999), and the requirements established in the English Heritage (EH) volume entitled ‘*Management of Archaeological Projects*’ (MAP2).
- 1.3 The IFA defines an archaeological watching brief as: “*A formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive*”.
- 1.4 The purpose of an archaeological watching brief, as described by the IFA, is to:
- *allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works*
 - *provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard*
- 1.5 A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is

intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits. The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.

- 1.6 Benchmark Archaeology is an independent archaeological organisation providing a wide range of archaeological services carried out to the highest professional standards. We carry out watching briefs, evaluations, excavations, surveys, desk-based assessments and historic building recording, in addition to other specialist and logistical services. Benchmark Archaeology is committed to ensuring that the client receives a cost-effective service, whilst maintaining the highest professional standards, and enhancing the archaeological record. All projects are carried out in accordance with PPG 15 and 16 (DoE, 1990), the guidance of the Treasure Act (1996), and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and English Heritage.
- 1.7 Richard Cherrington is Principal Archaeologist at *Benchmark Archaeology*. He has extensive experience as a commercial archaeologist working for university and local authority archaeological units in the UK and overseas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Ancient History & Archaeology, a PG Cert in Environmental Management, and a PG Diploma in Practical Archaeology. Richard is an Associate of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (AIFA) and a Fellow of The Royal Geographical Society (FRGS). Richard is a member of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA), Vernacular Architecture Group (VAG), and the British Brick Society (BBS).

2.0 SITE LOCATION, LANDUSE AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The site is located on c. 0.13 hectares of land at the Old Police House, Mill Street, Rocester (SK 11047 39289, Figures 1 and 2), East Staffordshire. Rocester is situated c. 6.0km to the north of the town of Uttoxeter. The site is bounded by the site of an Augustinian monastery to the east, and by neighbouring properties and associated land to the east and north. The line of Mill Street forms the sites southern boundary.
- 2.2 The centre of the site had formerly been occupied by a Police House which had been demolished prior to archaeological monitoring. Parts of the site had also been disturbed evaluation work carried out by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006. Ordnance Survey mapping of 1881 (Figure 3) illustrates that the site was undeveloped in the late 19th Century and appears to have comprised an orchard.

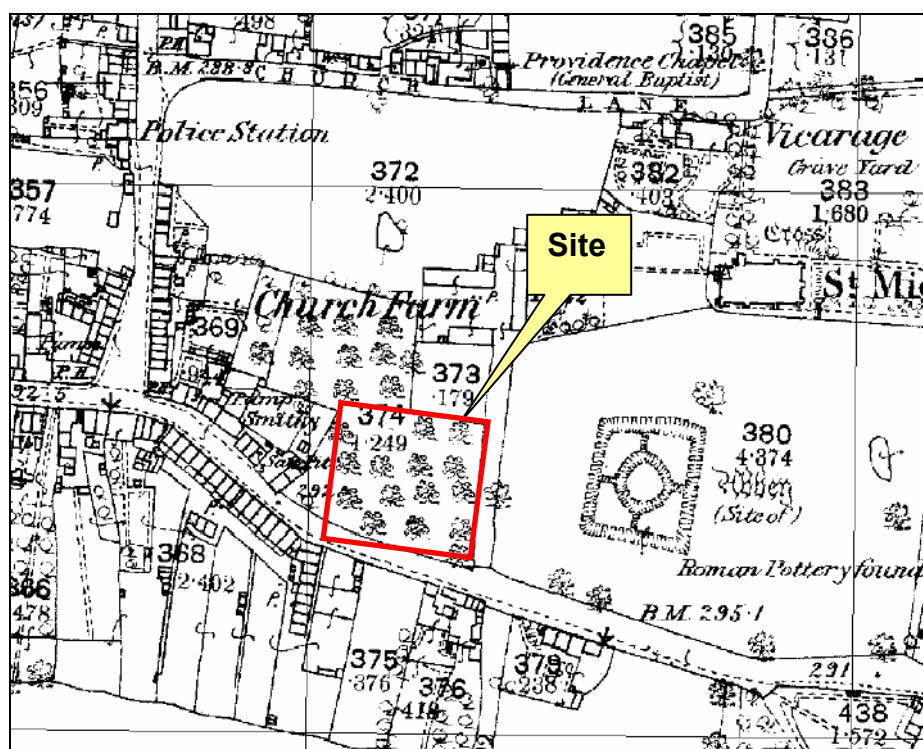


Figure 3: Extract from the 1881 Ordnance Survey map

2.3 The underlying geology of the area comprises river terrace sands and gravels associated with the River Dove and River Churnet.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 General Background

3.1.1 The application site (hereinafter the ‘site’) lies within an area of known archaeological significance. Several sites of historic and archaeological interest and records of previous investigations are present in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Two recorded archaeological sites extend across the site itself. These sites comprise the Augustinian monastery at Rocester founded in 1146 (PRN 00083), and three phases of the Roman fort with associated civilian settlement (PRN 01803). To the north and east, the abbey site and part of the Roman forts is designated a Scheduled Monument (Staffordshire SAM no.66 Dean 2007).

3.2 Previous Archaeological Work

3.2.1 *The Site*

3.2.1.1 During August 2006, Birmingham Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of three trenches and three test-pits with a total sample area of 72m². All

the trenches and test-pits contained archaeological deposits dating to the Roman period. The evaluation identified seven ditches, three pits, one cobbled surface and one possible wall.

- 3.2.1.2 The large linear ditches extended across the site and cut through clay surfaces containing charcoal and substantial quantities of grey-ware pottery. The area of cobbles was identified in association with the possibly butchered remains of a cow.
- 3.2.1.3 The archaeological work produced quantities of Romano-British pottery dating to the 1st – 2nd Century AD. Other finds included coins, iron nails, copper alloy, slag, glass, fired clay and oyster shells. The animal bone assemblage consisted of the bones of cattle, sheep and pig comprising a standard food/butchery waste assemblage with the presence of pig bones suggesting a certain degree of high status. Charred plant remains were also recovered, and included weed seeds and cereal grains.
- 3.2.1.4 To Summarise, the evaluation work identified Romano-British activity largely dating to the 2nd Century AD and has been interpreted as possibly representing the eastern section of the *vicus*¹ identified during archaeological work immediately to the west (Ellis forthcoming).
- 3.2.2 *The Vicinity*
- 3.2.2.1 Early reports of archaeological remains in the area include the recovery of human remains during construction work at Arkwright's Mill on the River Dove (east of site) in the 18th/19th Century, with further human remains being identified during the laying of a water pipe-line in the southeast corner of Abbey Fields (immediately north of site) in the 1960's. The discovery of these remains suggests the presence of a Roman, or perhaps Saxon, cemetery in the area, although the disturbance of prehistoric burials cannot be ruled out (I.M. Ferris *pers. comm.*).
- 3.2.2.2 During the 1980's, large-scale excavations carried out by BUFAU (now Birmingham Archaeology) took place at the new cemetery to the north of the site (Esmonde-Cleary and Ferris 1996). The excavated sequence encompassed three successive Roman forts dating from the period 100 to 200 AD. After the abandonment of the third and final fort, it appeared that a civilian settlement was established during the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD. At some stage the settlement received a defensive clay rampart and possibly a wall. This may suggest that settlement had the status of a small town or roadside settlement.

¹ *ad hoc* provincial civilian settlement set-up close to and because of a nearby official Roman site, usually a military garrison or state-owned mining operation.

- 3.2.2.3 In the 1990's, excavations were carried out by BUFAU at Orton's Pasture, to the south of the site. This recorded a sequence of Romano-British activity largely dating to the late 1st to mid 2nd Century AD. Elements of two contemporary enclosures, probably associated with the Roman fort complex to the north, were excavated. Archaeological features within and without the enclosures yielded significant amounts of domestic refuse including pottery, animal bone, and other finds. A fragment of an altar was also recovered. A small stone building identified within one of the enclosures was interpreted as a shrine (Ferris, Bevan and Cuttler 2000).
- 3.2.2.4 In 1996 BUFAU, working to the north of Mill Street (immediately west of the site), recovered evidence of a Roman *vicus* associated with the forts (Ellis forthcoming). The 1996 investigations also found that medieval and earlier stratigraphic deposits did survive later post-medieval building activity in places along the northern side of Mill Street.
- 3.2.2.5 Evidence for industrial activity and animal husbandry has been identified during recent excavations by Birmingham Archaeology at Northfield Avenue, to the north of the site (Burrows and Halsted forthcoming).
- 3.2.2.6 In 2002-04, a watching brief carried out by Iain Ferris Archaeological Associates at Abbey Farm (to the north of the site) identified the presence of a clay rampart surrounding the 3rd - 4th Century post-military civilian settlement. Ferris suggested that the rampart may extend on a north-south alignment across the Old Police House site. (I.M. Ferris *pers. comm.*).

4.0 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Archaeological Methodology

- 4.1.1 The objective of the work was to ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains on the site and to obtain a record of significant archaeological features, deposits and artefacts and to record their levels, extent, date and character.
- 4.1.2 A specific aim of the work was to secure the adequate recording of any Romano-British deposits associated with either the Roman fort or *vicus* to the east of the site.
- 4.1.3 To achieve this objective, an archaeological watching brief was maintained by a suitably qualified archaeologist during soil stripping and ground-works. Foundation excavation was carried out using a

mechanical excavator fitted with an appropriate bucket, supplemented by manual excavation where necessary. Generated spoil was examined for archaeological material.

4.1.4 All archaeological work followed SCAUM guidelines (Allen *et al* 1997) and relevant Health and Safety legislation.

4.1.5 Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate, and located on an overall site plan. A detailed context record was maintained on *pro-forma* record cards. Each context was allocated a unique number and was subject to a written description. An index of all features, contexts, photographs, plans, sections, samples and finds was maintained. Site photography was carried out using 35mm SLR cameras, with colour slide and monochrome film, supplemented by digital images. These records form the site archive which is currently stored at the offices of *Benchmark Archaeology*.

4.2 Construction Methodology

4.2.1 Prior to archaeological monitoring the former Police House had been demolished. The area of the new building was then stripped of c. 0.30m of topsoil and hardstanding to formation level. This work was carried out under archaeological supervision.



Plate 1: *Topsoil and hardstanding stripping in progress, looking southeast*

4.2.2 The main phase of ground-work comprised the mechanical excavation of interconnecting strip foundation trenches to receive mass concrete footings forming the ground plan of the new building. The foundation trenches ranged between 0.45m – 0.60m in width, and 0.90m – 1.20m in depth from formation level.



Plate 2: *The new building footprint, looking south*

5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS (Figures 4, 5 and 6)

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Archaeological monitoring identified and recorded the remains of 3 linear features, 2 charcoal-rich clay surfaces, 2 pits, and 3 features of undetermined function. The ceramic assemblage consisted of 75 sherds of pottery and 11 fragments of *tegula*². A small amount of animal bone was collected, along with 3 fragments of disarticulated human bone. A single un-stratified Roman coin was also discovered. Charcoal-rich clay surfaces and layers of burnt clay were frequently noted during archaeological monitoring. Identified archaeological features were cut into a matrix of dark-brown clayey loam and gravel. The level of the natural ground surface was not identified during archaeological monitoring

5.2 Watching Brief Results

- 5.2.1 Feature 101 comprised an east-west aligned shallow round-based linear ditch/gully measuring 0.36m in width and 0.25m in depth. The ditch/gully was filled by a single deposit of mid-grey/brown sandy clay with small stones (100).

² interlocking ceramic roofing tiles used in Roman architecture



Plate 3: *Section of Feature 101, looking east
(1.0m and 0.50m scales)*

- 5.2.2 Ditch 115 consisted of a shallow linear cut with gently sloping sides and a flat base measuring 0.25m in depth and up to 0.45m in width. The ditch was aligned approximately north-south and was filled by a single deposit of dark-brown sandy clayey loam with small stones (114) and contained one sherd of Romano-British pottery.



Plate 4: *Section of Feature 115, looking north (0.50m scale)*

- 5.2.3 Feature 119 was located immediately to the west of Ditch 115 and comprised a narrow linear ditch running along a similar north-south alignment. The ditch measured 0.90m in width and 0.60m in depth and was filled by a deposit of dark-brown sandy clayey loam with small stones (120). Deposit 120 contained 3 fragments of human bone in addition to 2 sherds of Roman-British pottery and a fragment of clinker. This feature appeared to continue further to the south.

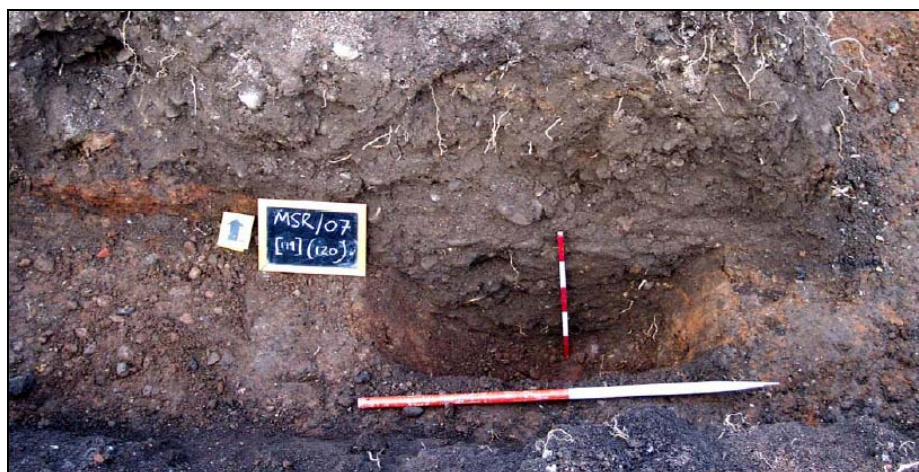


Plate 5: *Section of Feature 119, looking north (0.50m and 1.0m scales)*

- 5.2.4 To the north of the site, a series of undulating burnt clay and charcoal layers (123, 124, 126, 127 and 128) were identified in section. These deposits measured c. 3.0m in width and had a combined depth of 0.24m.



Plate 6: *Burnt clay and charcoal layers (123-128), looking southeast (1.0m and 2.0m scales)*

- 5.2.5 To the east of the site, similar deposits of burnt clay (116 and 118) were present. A large quantity of Romano-British pottery, including 48 sherds from a single vessel, was recovered from Deposit 116.



Plate 7: *Burnt clay layers (116 and 118), looking north (1.0m scales)*

- 5.2.6 Feature 103 comprised the remains of a pit located to the south of the site. The pit had a flat-base and steeply sloping sides, and measured 1.38m in width, and 0.80m in depth. The primary fill of the pit (102) consisted of dark grey/brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal flecks, containing 3 sherds of Romano-British pottery. The pit had been re-cut at some point and was filled by a series of brown sandy clay deposits (108, 107, 106 and 105).



Plate 8: *Feature 103, looking south (0.50m and 1.0m scales)*

- 5.2.7 Feature 111 consisted of a rounded pit interpreted as a post-pit. The pit measured c. 1.30m in width and was recorded in section. The fill of the pit comprised deposits of grey/brown sandy clay (110 and 112). The post-packing element of the pit consisted of large rounded pebbles within a matrix of grey/brown sandy clay (113). Deposit 112 yielded a single sherd of Romano-British pottery.



Plate 9: *Feature 111, looking east (1.0m scale)*

- 5.2.8 Features 131, 132 and 133 were located to the north of the site, immediately to the west of burnt clay and charcoal layers 123-128. The features were revealed after the manual cleaning of a deposit largely consisting of fragmentary fired clay (129). Feature 131 was a small and truncated round post-hole or stake-hole c. 0.20m in diameter. Feature 132 consisted of a shallow oval pit measuring 1.0m in length, 0.6m in width, and up to 0.20m in depth. Pit 132 was cut by a narrow gully (133) measuring 0.25m in width and up to 0.20m in depth. Features 131, 132 and 133 were both filled and sealed by a layer of fragmentary fired clay, sandy clay, small pebbles and very occasional charcoal. Deposit 129 yielded a single sherd of Romano-British pottery and seven fragments of *tegula*.



Plate 10: *Features 132 and 133
looking north (0.50m and 1.0m scales)*



Plate 11: *Feature 132, looking north (0.50m scale)*



Plate 12: *Feature 133, looking south (0.50m scale)*

6.0 THE FINDS (Appendix I)

6.1 The Pottery *by L C Griffin*

6.1.1 Introduction

6.1.1.1 *Artefactual analysis*

The commission required an assessment of the quantity, range and potential of artefacts recovered during watching brief. The aims of the finds assessment were:

- a) to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts
- b) to describe the range of artefacts present
- c) to preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts

6.1.1.2 *Method of analysis*

All hand-retrieved artefacts were examined and identified, quantified and dated to period. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2000 database.

Local pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series created for the 'Rocester Old Shops' report (Leary forthcoming). Non-local wares are referenced to the National Roman Pottery Fabric Reference Series (Tomber and Dore 1998).

6.1.1.3 *Results of analysis*

The ceramic assemblage recovered from the site consisted of 75 sherds of pottery and 11 fragments of ceramic roofing tile. A single fragment of clinker was also recovered. Ceramic material was retrieved from seven stratified contexts, and from spoil-heaps. The material displayed low to moderate levels of abrasion, and was all of Roman date.

All artefacts have been quantified and dated according to material type. A further table is also included to illustrate pottery fabric with associated date ranges. Diagnostic pottery sherds were identified as being of a particular form type and dated accordingly. Remaining undiagnostic fragments were datable by fabric type to the general period or production span (see Tables 1-3 in Appendix I).

6.1.1.4 *Discussion*

Below is a summary of the artefacts and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

All finds can be dated to the Roman period, more specifically to the 1st and 2nd Centuries AD.

6.1.2 The Pottery Assemblage

6.1.2.1 The pottery assemblage amounted to 75 sherds weighing 1791g. As expected, the majority of these sherds were locally produced coarsewares of fabric types commonly identified on sites within the Rocester area. The majority were undiagnostic but where diagnostic sherds were present, they indicated that the assemblage dated to the first half of the Roman period with specific forms dating to the 1st and 2nd Centuries AD.

6.1.2.2 The largest group of sherds came from Context 116 and consisted of 48 sherds from a single large storage jar (Fabric OBA 1). In addition, a

further three sherds of oxidised ware were retrieved (Context 129 and unstratified) and identified as being of Fabrics OAB4 and OAC1. These sherds included the base of a small carinated beaker (unstratified) and the rim from a small jar (Context 129), both of which could be dated to between the late 1st and 2nd Centuries AD.

6.1.2.3 Local reduced wares consisted of 10 sherds. Of these, eight could be identified as being of specific fabric types (Fabrics GRA1, GRB4, GRC1 and GRC; Contexts 102, 116, 120 and unstratified), with the remaining two remaining unclassified (UNC; Contexts 112 and unstratified). Diagnostic sherds within this group consisted of rim, base and body sherds from a rusticated jar (Fabric GRA1; unstratified) which could be dated to between the late 1st and early 2nd Centuries AD.

6.1.2.4 In addition to the oxidised and reduced wares, an everted rim sherd of a shell-tempered fabric (Fabric CTB; Context 120), a body sherd from a flagon (FLA2; Context 102) and a base sherd of early coarse ware (GTA; unstratified) were also identified.

6.1.2.5 Non-local wares formed a far smaller proportion of the assemblage and consisted of fabric and form types commonly identified within assemblages in this region. These included two sherds of Black-Burnished ware type 1 (BB1; Context 122 and unstratified), of which one came from a jar which could be dated to the 2nd Century AD on the basis of incised acute angled lattice decoration (Context 122).

6.1.2.6 Five sherds of samian ware were also present and identified as being of Central Gaulish Fabric (CGTS). Forms represented by these sherds consisted of a Dragendorff 37 bowl dating between the late 1st and 2nd Centuries AD and a Dragendorff 18/31 dish which could be dated between the late 1st and mid 2nd Centuries AD (Context 102).

6.1.2.7 Remaining sherds consisted of four sherds of Dressel 20 amphorae (BAT AM; Contexts 114 and 116). These sherds were more abraded than others from the site, with much of the original external surfaces missing.

6.1.3 The Tile Assemblage

6.1.3.1 In addition to the pottery, a total of 11 tile fragments was identified, including 9 fragments of *tegula*. Seven fragments came from a single context (Context 127), the remaining tile fragments were unstratified but all were of the same hard, well-fired fabric, displaying only light surface abrasion. No signature marks or cut-aways were noted on the flanged tiles.

6.1.4 Significance

6.1.4.1 The material from contexts on this site can be attributed to a narrow period between the late 1st and 2nd Centuries AD. The pottery consists primarily of locally produced coarsewares and displays relatively low levels of abrasion indicating the deposits to have lain largely undisturbed following deposition. This assumption is further supported by the presence of a large number of sherds from a single vessel within Context 116.

6.1.4.2 The presence of roofing tile is not unsurprising given the location of the site and indicates that there is likely to have been a structure of some substance in the close vicinity. The remains of stone buildings have been recorded at the Mill Street *vicus* site, Orton's Pasture, and Northfield Avenue. At the New Cemetery site *tegulae* had been recycled to provide probable cooking surfaces.



Plate 13: *Selection of the ceramic assemblage (20cm scale)*

6.2 **Bone Assemblage** by Emma Hancox

6.2.1 Animal Bone

6.2.1.1 Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from the site during the watching brief. The animal bone was recovered from Deposit 116 and comprised two fragmented cattle metapodials. The bones were from a small individual(s) consistent with the smaller breeds predating the post-medieval improvements in animal husbandry. The more complete of the two fragments was from an adult and showed evidence of slight splaying of the condyles. This is indicative of an older animal, or one that was regularly harnessed to a plough.

6.2.1.2 There was no evidence within the assemblage of butchery, burning or gnawing, however, much of the bone was in poor condition and any surface marks may have been eroded.

6.2.2 Human Bone

6.2.2.1 Deposit 122 produced the fragments of disarticulated human bone comprising the distal end of a femur, the proximal end of a tibia and part of the shaft of a humerus, potentially from a single individual. The bone was fragmented and cracked with exfoliation of the outer surfaces. The assemblage is too small to be of archaeological significance and no further work is recommended.

6.2.2.2 As discussed above, the recovery of human remains has been recorded in other areas of Rocester. Human bone was reported at Arkwright's Mill during 18th/19th Century building work, and also during the laying of water pipe in the southeast corner of Abbey Fields in the 1960's (I M Ferris *pers. comm.*). The recovery of the human bone from the site suggests the former presence of a Roman cemetery in the area, although a Prehistoric or Saxon date cannot be ruled out.

6.3 **Other Finds**

6.3.1 Roman Coin

6.3.1.1 A single un-stratified Roman coin was recovered from generated spoil on the site. The coin was complete and fabricated from copper-alloy, was 9g in weight, and measured c.27.5mm in diameter. The coin was heavily corroded and much of the surface details and inscriptions were abraded and unclear. The male head shown on the obverse of the coin (Plate 14), however, appears to wear a full beard, if so, this would give a *terminus post quem* of the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD). The historian Cassius Dio stated that Hadrian "*was the first emperor who allowed his beard to grow.*" A Hadrianic/early post-Hadrianic (2nd Century AD) date for the coin would seem to fit well with the other dating evidence identified from both the 2007 watching

brief and 2006 evaluation. Coins with a similar date range have been recovered during excavations at the New Cemetery site.



Plate 14: *Un-stratified Roman coin (obverse, 1.0cm scale)*



Plate 15: *Un-stratified Roman coin (reverse, 1.0cm scale)*

7.0 CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

- 7.1 The watching brief was successful in its aims. Archaeological monitoring identified and recorded a range of Romano-British features and deposits across the site. Dating evidence suggested that these features and deposits broadly dated from the late 1st Century to 2nd Century AD, although the majority of the evidence from the watching brief and preceding evaluation work in 2006 suggests a more specific 2nd Century date.
- 7.2 The work recorded the remains of 3 linear features, 2 charcoal-rich clay surfaces, 2 pits, and 3 features of undetermined function. Most of the features and deposits contained pottery and ceramic material. The ceramic assemblage consisted of 75 sherds of late 1st Century to 2nd Century pottery, and 11 fragments of *tegula*. A small amount of animal bone was collected, along with 3 fragments of disarticulated human bone. A single un-stratified Roman coin of probable 2nd Century date was also discovered. Identified archaeological features were cut into a

matrix of dark-brown clayey loam and gravel. The level of the natural ground surface was not identified during archaeological monitoring

- 7.3 Given the complexity of the archaeology on site, and the parameters and constraints of the watching brief condition, a definitive and detailed interpretation of the archaeology encountered is difficult to produce. Where the excavated evidence allows, however, some interpretation of the features and function of the site is offered.
- 7.4 Of the 3 linear features identified, Ditches 115 and 119 run along a parallel N-S alignment and may possibly define a route through the presumed *vicus*. The recovery of fragmentary human remains in the fill of Ditch 119 was of particular interest and perhaps supports the suggestion of a roadside ditch, although no definitive dating evidence for the deposition of the human remains was identified. Alternatively, Ditches 115 and 119 may simply relate to property boundaries, and this interpretation is offered for Ditch/Gully 101.
- 7.5 Pit 111 has been interpreted as post-pit possibly associated with domestic or industrial structures on the site. The pit was found in close proximity to layers of burnt clay and charcoal (116 and 118) which may represent the site of a former hearth. Pit 103 was filled by a series of deposits and is probably the remains of a rubbish pit.
- 7.6 Burnt clay and charcoal layers 123-128 to the north of the site would appear to suggest industrial activity and may represent a sequence of floors for an oven, kiln or furnace. This interpretation is supported by the presence of a spread of fragmentary fired-clay (129) immediately to the west of layers 123-128 which may have been the remains of a superstructure. The spread of fired-clay (129) both sealed and filled Features 131, 132 and 133 which comprised a small post-hole, an ovoid scoop, and linear gully respectively. The function of these features is unknown but given their proximity to the burnt clay and charcoal layers they may have been industrial in nature. What was apparent, however, was that the fired clay layer had been purposely levelled and rammed in order to form a surface after Features 131, 132 and 133 had gone out of use.
- 7.7 The excavated features and deposits are broadly comparable to those recorded during the preceding controlled evaluation work carried out by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006. The remains on site are likely to represent an eastern section of the *vicus* identified to the west of the site (Ellis forthcoming). The watching brief site straddles both the *vicus* and fort areas with the *vicus* extending further to the south. Within the wider *vicus* area there appear to be some distinction in the activities carried out, potential ritual activity to the south (Orton's Pasture), industrial activity to the west (Mill Street), and further industrial activity with animal husbandry to the north (Northfield

Avenue). The remains on the Old Police House site correspond with the 3rd phase of the forts.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 The project was managed by **Richard Cherrington BA, PG Cert, PG Dip Archaeol, AIFA, FRGS**, *Principal Archaeologist, Benchmark Archaeology*, who also supervised the watching brief and wrote this report on behalf of the client, Dr Richard Aldridge. The Project was monitored by Mr. Steve Dean, Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology), Staffordshire County Council. We are grateful to Tim Bloor and his team from BJ Bloor (Quality Builders) Ltd. for their cooperation and assistance during the watching brief.

8.2 We would also like to extend our thanks to Martin Cook BA, MIFA for his assistance on site, supplied at short notice. We are especially grateful to Iain Ferris for providing his comments on the first draft of the report.

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Figures

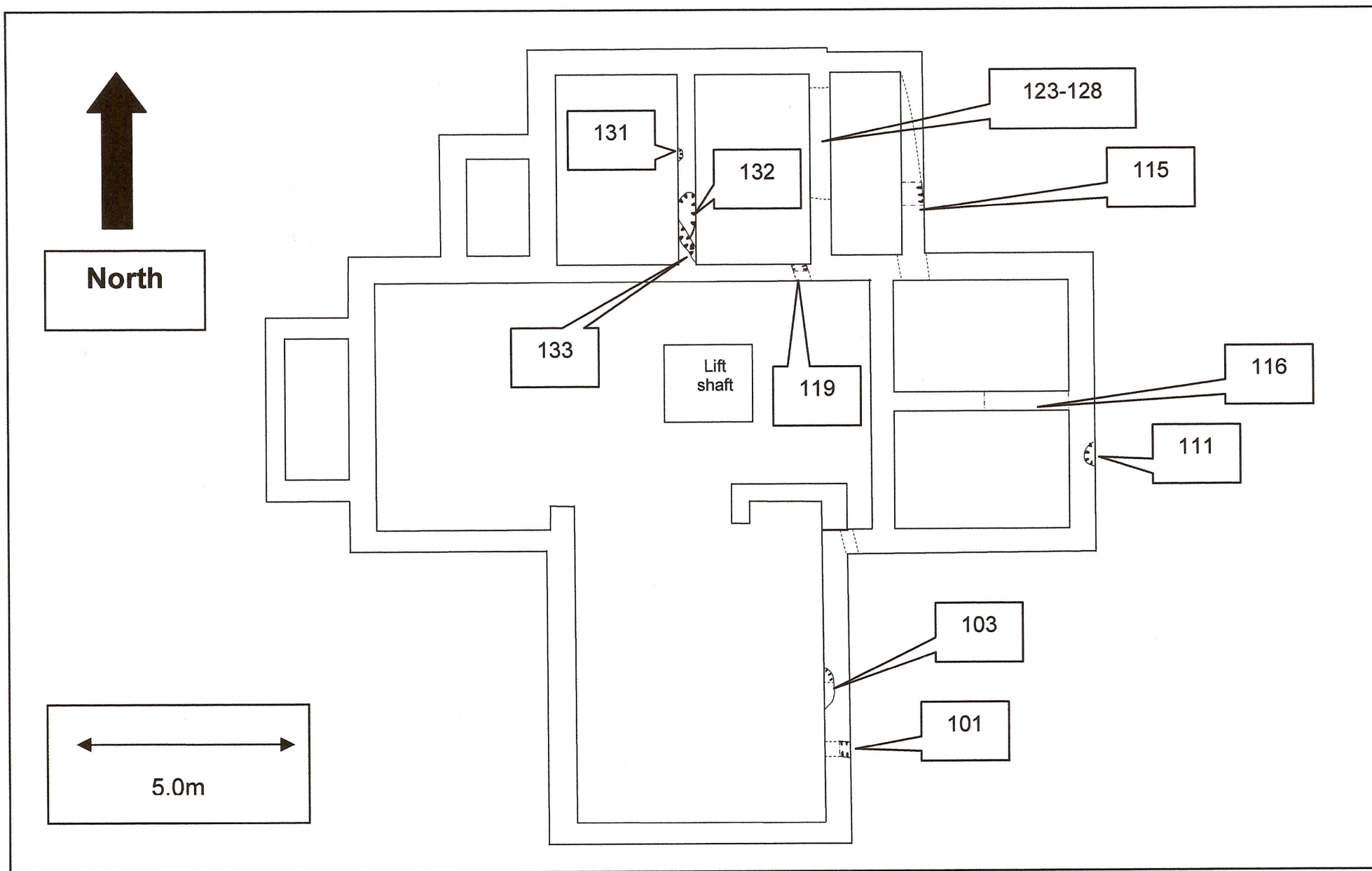


Figure 4: *Plan of excavated features*

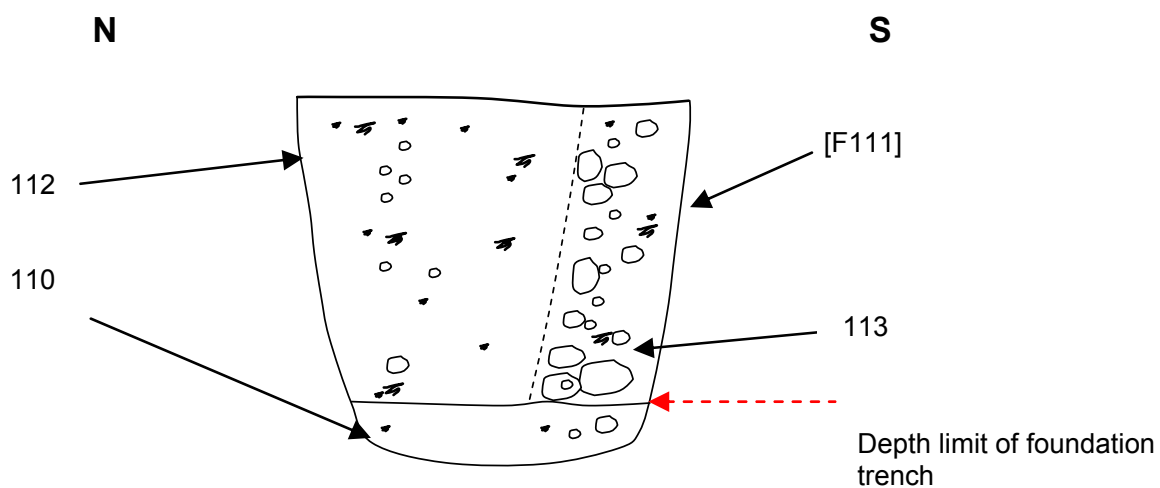
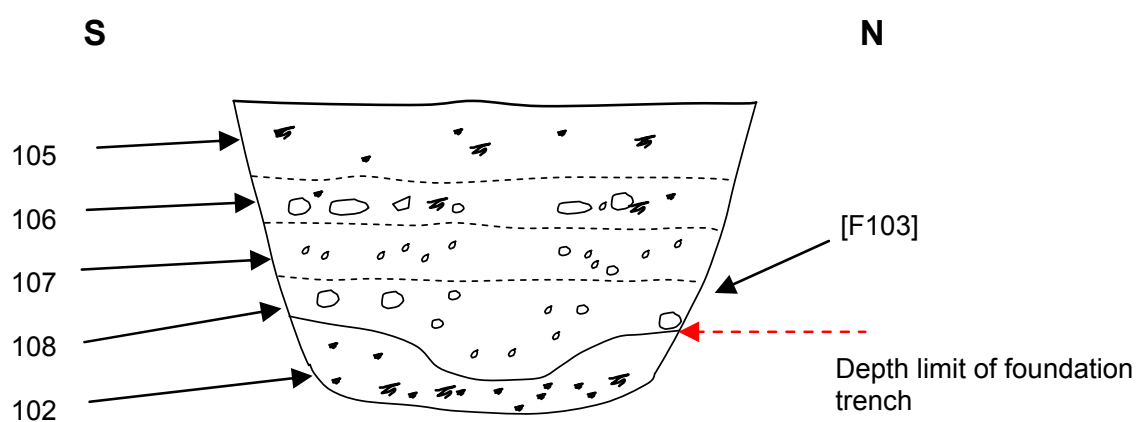
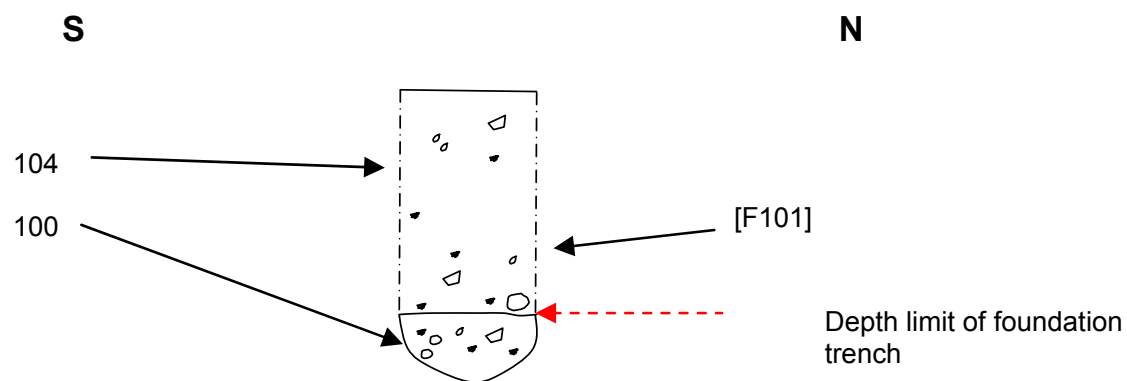


Figure 5: *Sections of Features 101, 103 and 111 (1:20 scale @ A4)*

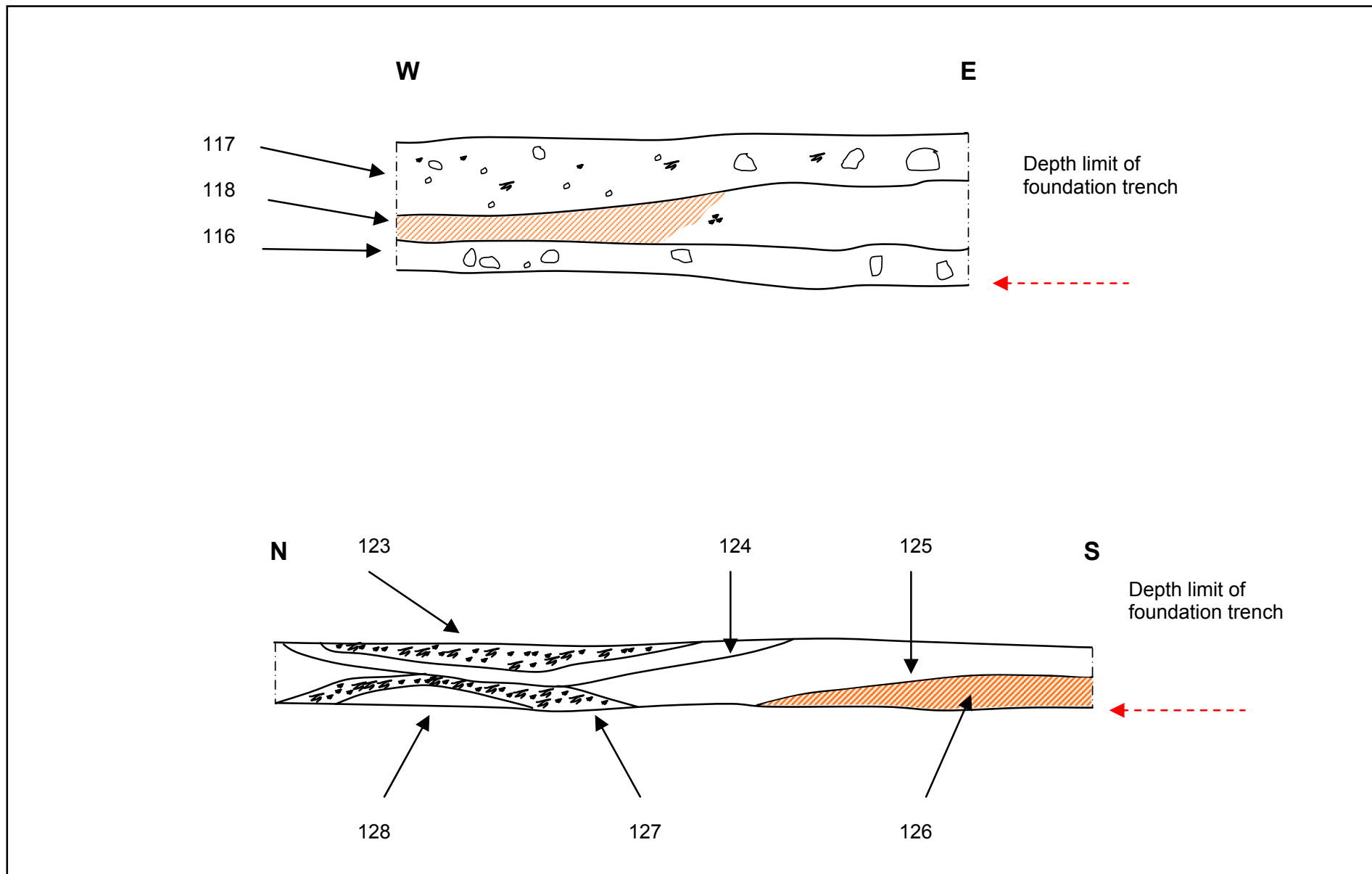


Figure 6: *Sections of Deposits 116-118, and 123-128 (1:20 scale @ A4)*

Appendices

Appendix I: Pottery Quantification Tables *by L C Griffin*

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Roman pottery	75	1791
Roman tile	11	970
Clinker	1	36

Table 1: *Quantification of the assemblage*

Fabric	Total	Weight (g)
BB1	2	26
BAT AM	4	238
CGTS	5	32
CTB	1	4
FLA2	1	6
GRA1	4	33
GRB4	2	98
GRC1	1	12
GRC2	1	0
GTA	1	8
OAB4	2	20
OAC1	1	6
OBA1	48	1298
UNC	2	10

Table 2: *Quantification of the pottery by fabric*

Context	Material	Type	Fabric	Total	Weight (g)	Date range	Period
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	BB1	1	20	AD120+	RBR
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	CGTS	4	20		RBR
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	GRA1	3	32	L1-E2C	RBR
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	GTA	1	8		RBR
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	OAB4	2	20	1-2C	RBR
Unstratified	Pottery	Roman	UNC	1	6		RBR
Unstratified	Tile	Roman		2	66		RBR
Unstratified	Tile	Tegula		2	230		RBR
102	Pottery	Roman	CGTS	1	12		RBR
102	Pottery	Roman	FLA2	1	6	2-4C	RBR
102	Pottery	Roman	GRA1	1	1		RBR
112	Pottery	Roman	UNC	1	4		RBR
114	Pottery	Roman	BAT AM	1	4		RBR
116	Pottery	Roman	BAT AM	3	234		RBR
116	Pottery	Roman	GRB4	2	98		RBR
116	Pottery	Roman	GRC2	1	0		RBR
116	Pottery	Roman	OBA1	48	1298		RBR
120	Clinker			1	36		
120	Pottery	Roman	CTB	1	4		RBR
120	Pottery	Roman	GRC1	1	12		RBR
122	Pottery	Roman	BB1	1	6	2C	RBR
129	Pottery	Roman	OAC1	1	6		RBR
129	Tile	Tegula		7	674		RBR

Table 3: *Quantification of the pottery by context and fabric type*

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