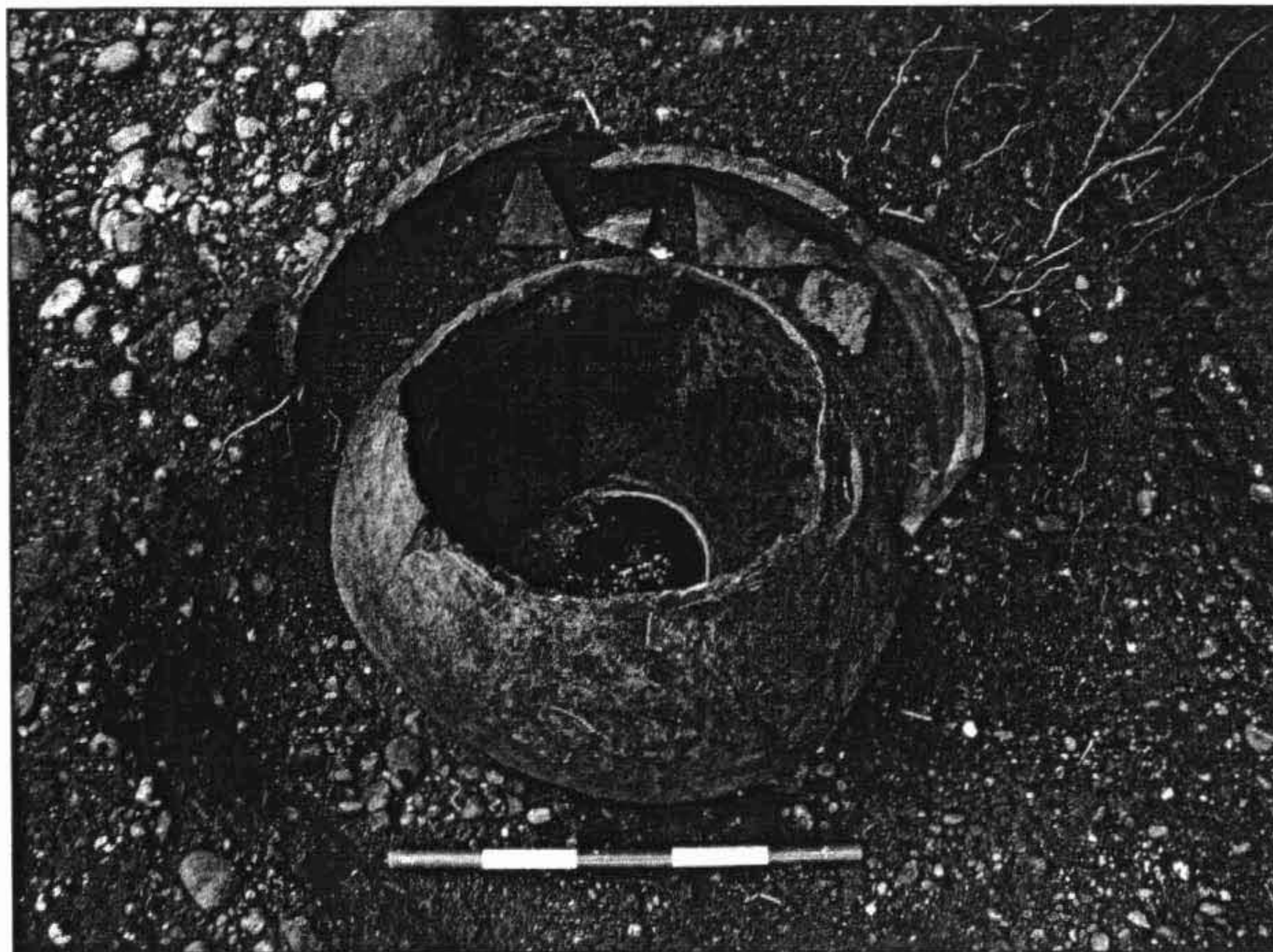


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EWA 7442
CWA 11463
MWA 9880

ALB3

Archaeological Evaluation at
Abbey Works, Bleachfield Street, Alcester,
Warwickshire



 **Warwickshire**
County Council
Libraries & Heritage
Museum Field Services
Archaeology Projects Group

February 2003

Archaeological Evaluation at Abbey Works, Bleachfield Street, Alcester, Warwickshire

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February 2003

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Occupation (3791) AL9

road

quarry (industrial)

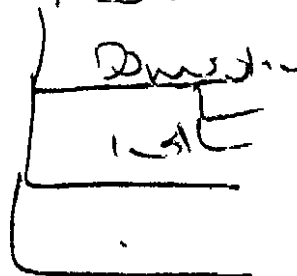
metal working (industrial) } S489

new road

new source.



(Roman Alcester



Summary

An archaeological evaluation involving eight trial trenches was undertaken at Abbey Works, Bleachfield Street, Alcester, Warwickshire. The site lies to the south of the later Roman town defences in an extramural area and the suggested location for an early fort. Evidence of extensive Roman activity from the 1st to 4th century was recorded across the site. Features and stratigraphy survived beneath interior floors and exterior yard surfaces with only limited evidence for localised truncation.

The archaeological remains included evidence of a north-south road, associated ditches and possible roadside structure. One additional possible beamslot was revealed. A series of rubbish pits and a possible quarry pit were revealed at the southern and western parts of the site. The evaluation also revealed an almost intact large amphora set into a pit and covered by a second storage jar or amphora. A large quantity of egg shell and chicken bone was recovered from the amphora. Metalled surfaces and gullies were recorded close to the amphora. A single hearth with metalworking slag was also uncovered.

1. Introduction

1.1 A pre-application enquiry has been made to Stratford on Avon District Council for a residential development at the site currently occupied by the Abbey Works, Bleachfield Street, Alcester. The site lies within an area of Roman occupation within the Roman town and Roman deposits are known to exist on the site. The site therefore lies within an area of potential archaeological importance, adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Warwickshire SAM 128); for that reason a programme of archaeological field evaluation was recommended. The archaeological evaluation would provide the Planning Authority with further information on the likely survival, extent and nature of archaeological remains within the site.

1.2 An archaeological evaluation in accordance with a brief prepared by the Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Projects Group and carried out in December 2002. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code AL83. This report presents the results of the evaluation.

2. Site location

2.1 The site of the proposed development is located on the west side of Bleachfield Street in the parish of Alcester, Warwickshire. The site is situated close to the centre of the town of Alcester and is bounded by Bleachfield Street to the east, Birch Abbey to the west and residential dwellings and gardens to the south and north. The approximate centre of the site is located at National Grid Reference SP 0883 5712 (Fig. 1).

2.2 The underlying geology is recorded as First and Second Terrace River Gravels (British Geological Survey 1974).

2.3 The site is occupied by a complex of factory buildings and adjoining yard and car parking areas. The proposed development site covers an area of approximately 0.05ha (0.14 acres) which includes the working factory and offices.

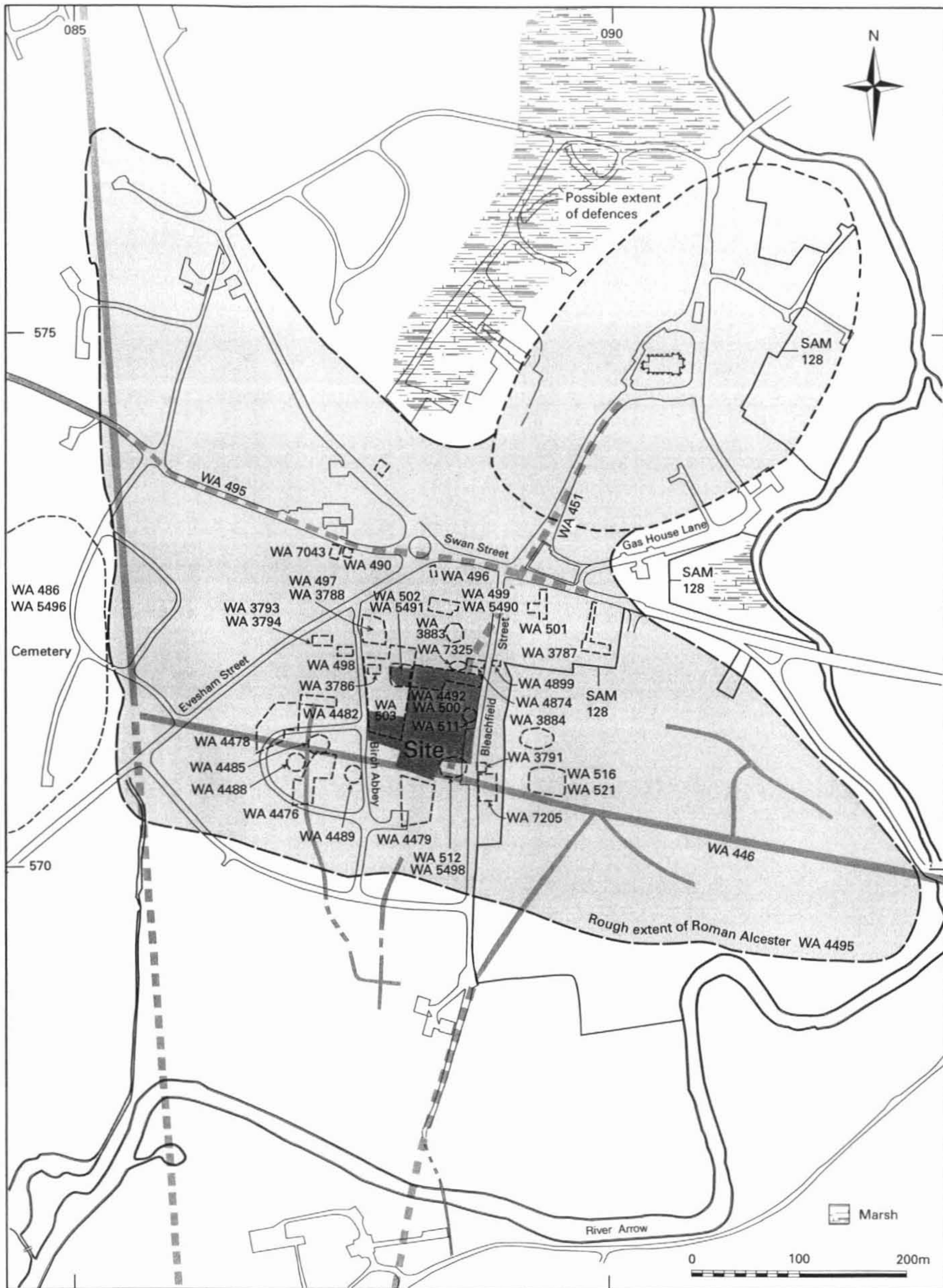


Fig. 1: Site location in Roman Alcester

3. Aims and methods of the evaluation

3.1 As the proposed development of the site might result in damage to or destruction of surviving archaeological remains. The aim of the evaluation was therefore to provide sufficient information on the presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation and the date of such remains within the boundaries of the site for the Planning Authority to assess the archaeological implications of any proposal and the requirement for any further archaeological work or mitigation strategy. In particular the evaluation would augment the details of depths of Roman stratigraphy provided by previous work on and around the site.

3.2 The evaluation involved background research into historical and early map evidence, aerial photographs and records of archaeological remains in local journals and other publications, a visual inspection of the entire site and the excavation of eight trial trenches.

3.3 The evaluation trenches, which were located across the site both within and outside existing buildings on the site and totalled approximately 75m in length. They were located in consultation with the Planning Archaeologist across the site so as to gather information about the whole of the site (Fig. 4). Four trenches were positioned with the working factories of SGL Carbon Group and David Hart Limited. These trenches were subject to some restrictions due to the proximity of supporting walls, services or working machinery.

3.4 A JCB-type machine and mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket excavated the 1.6m wide trenches. The existing concrete, overburden and topsoil were removed and underlying deposits were excavated in spits using the ditching bucket under the supervision of Warwickshire Museum staff. Deposits were removed by machine until significant archaeological deposits were revealed. These included archaeological features, both Roman and post-medieval and occupation deposits. These deposits and features were then excavated and recorded by hand.

3.5 The evaluation trenches were located by a total station survey using EDM in relation to existing features and positioned in relation to the Ordnance Survey grid. Several temporary benchmarks (TBM) were established on the site. These were derived from a benchmark located on the Swan Hotel, Swan Street (value 40.48m OD). Levels of archaeological features and deposits identified during the evaluation were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum using the site benchmarks.

4. Archaeological and historical background

4.1 A large number of archaeological sites and findspots associated with the Roman and medieval town of Alcester are recorded in the vicinity of the site on the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record (Appendix A and Fig 1).

Roman Town

4.2 The location of the development site lies to the south of the defended area of the major Romano-British town of Alcester (Sites and Monument Record No. WA 4495), which was probably known as Alauna. The initial Roman presence was military with a fort established on the hill south of the River Arrow and succeeded by a later fort in the area of the site around Bleachfield Street. The town seems to have first grown around the latter fort, and then continued to expand as a civilian settlement after the army moved northwards. The location of the settlement adjacent to Ryknild Street and at a road junction was probably significant in its development. The occupation of the settlement lasted until the end of the 4th century.

4.3 The early civilian settlement of Roman Alcester was an unwalled town, as were most other towns in Britain at this time. The defended area of the town, which was fortified by a rampart in the 2nd century AD, lay north-west of Gas House Lane on either side of Henley Street and High Street (Fig. 1). The latter modern road fossilises the line of a Roman road (SMR WA 451) and Swan Street marks the line of an adjoining road (SMR WA 495). This area was already protected by the presence of marshland to the west and the River Arrow to the east. The first defences consisted of a simple earthen bank probably with a timber revetment and superstructure. The remains of these defences have been identified 250m north-east of the site (SMR WA 506 and WA 5001, not shown on Fig. 1).

4.4 The earthwork defences were replaced during the 3rd quarter of the 4th century by a stone circuit wall, one of the latest to be constructed in Roman Britain. The best surviving stretch of the wall yet to be recorded was a 17m length revealed during excavations in 1985-6 (SMR WA 5001). A 4.1m wide foundation trench had oak piles rammed into its base and the projecting tops packed with angular stone

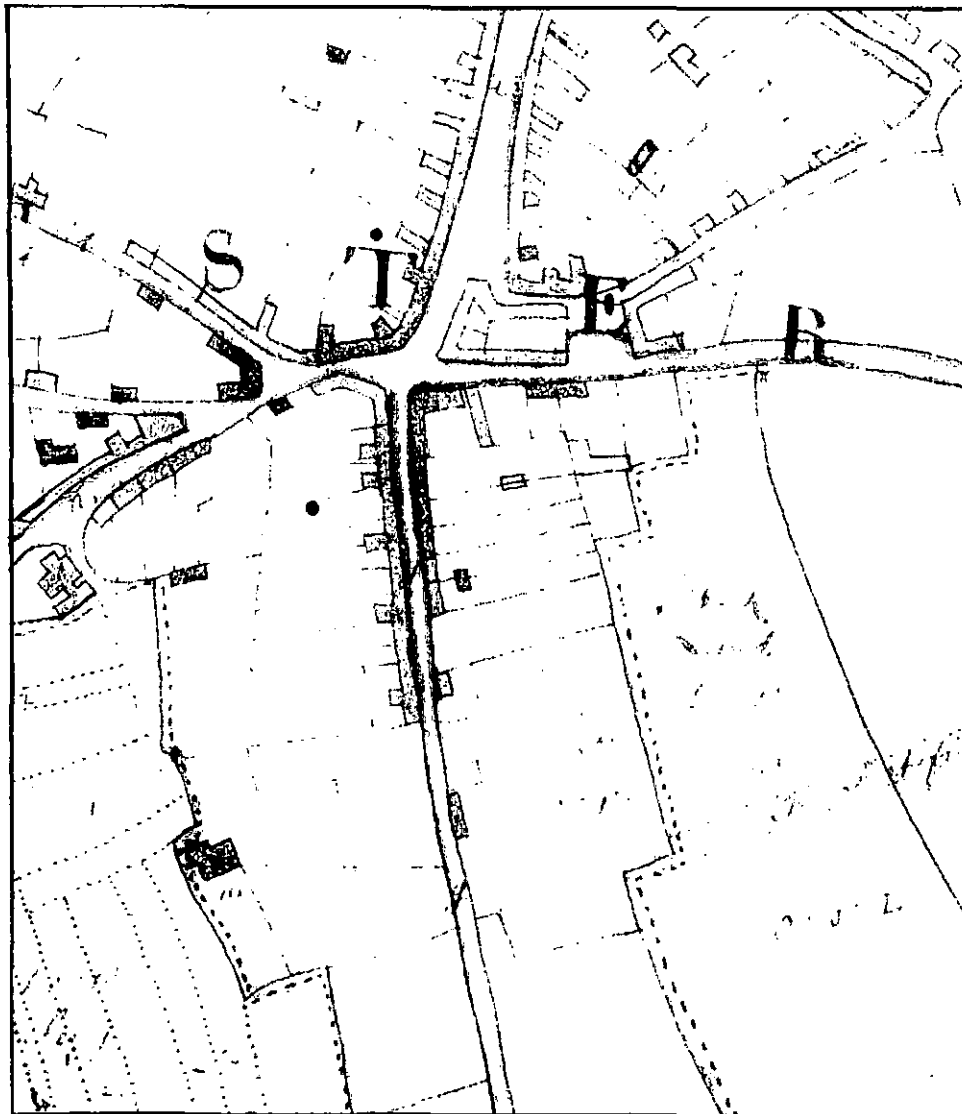


Fig. 2: Detail from W. Sutton's map of Alcester 1754

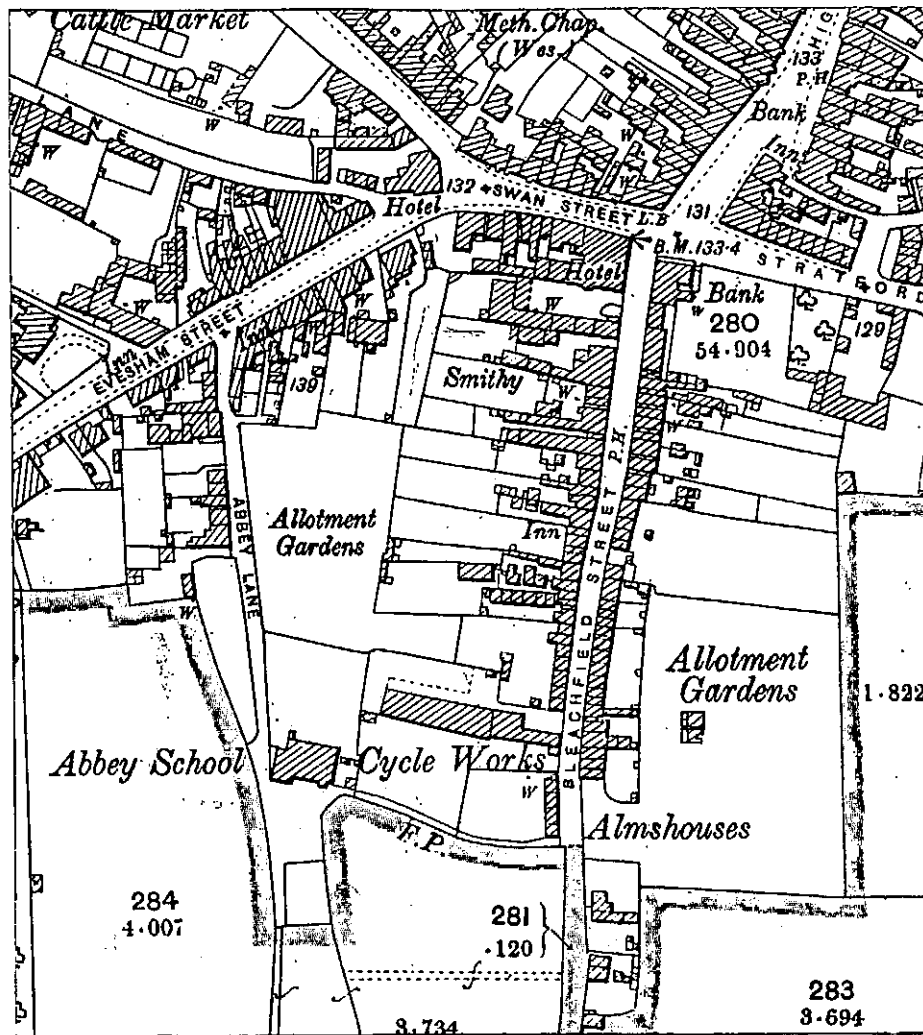


Fig. 3: Detail from Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map of 1905

rubble. There was a large suburban area to the south extending from the east of Bleachfield Street over the former fort to the north of Evesham Street and Seggs Lane (Warwickshire Museum 1995).

4.5 The presence of pre-Flavian pottery and military metalwork in the Bleachfield Street area, especially SMR WA 500 and SMR WA 3791 has led to speculation that this area may be the location of a Roman fort (Booth 1989, 31, 1994, 165; Taylor 1969 21-2, Booth and Evans 2001, Fig. 176).

4.6 Previous archaeological work has taken place on parts of the site. At the northern edge of the site at 27-33 Bleachfield Street, an excavation by S. J. Taylor in 1969 (Booth and Evans 2001) revealed a north-south road probably dating to the 2nd century. Traces of a succession of timber buildings dating from the 1st century were excavated (SMR WA 500). These buildings may be military in origin and the finds may provide evidence to support the presence of an early fort on part of the site. A Neolithic pit was also excavated (SMR WA 4492) along with medieval features including a stone drying pit and cess pit.

4.7 A further area was excavated in 1972 when gravel layers and associated timber buildings were revealed (Booth and Evans 2001). These appear to have gone out of use in the 3rd century when earth layers built up which contained large amounts of cattle bone (SMR WA 5491). Following this a further cobble surface was laid down, overlain by a layer of sandstone which sealed a number of late 3rd century coins. The remains of a large sandstone building and a mortar floor were also recorded nearby (Taylor 1973). Immediately west of the potential development

a sequence of gravel layers continued throughout the Romano-British period (SMR WA 3786; Cracknell 1986).

4.8 Excavations of four trial pits in 1988 (Fig 4), in the then *Baromix* factory (Warwickshire Museum 1989), revealed evidence for timber and stone buildings dating from the late 1st to later 2nd century. The pottery and metalwork recovered also suggested military associations (Booth and Evans 2001).

4.9 At the eastern edge of the site an excavation to the rear of the Almshouses at No 61 Bleachfield Street by B.W. Davis unearthed a cobble path (SMR WA 511). Further south excavations by H.V. Hughes between 1956-58 revealed an expanse of cobbled surface with an associated stone-flagged drain and soakaway cutting through the late 1st-mid 2nd century deposits (SMR WA 512). In 1964 Hughes also recorded a post-medieval well in this vicinity (SMR WA 5498) and a 7th century silver bracelet was also recovered (SMR WA 6461, not shown on Fig. 1).

4.10 Excavations north-west of the site in 1933 revealed a rough stone floor, together with some Romano-British pottery, was observed close to the rear of the pub buildings (SMR WA 497), though its precise location is unknown. A watching brief carried out close by in 1983 recorded a gravel surface and a possible pit, together with quantities of 2nd century pottery and the late Romano-British burial of an adolescent cutting the gravel surface (SMR WA 3788; Cracknell 1985). Some evidence for late Roman occupation was also recovered from the garden of Linby House, though it is unknown what form this took (SMR WA 502; Hughes 1958) whilst at Swan Street a cremation urn was recovered (SMR WA 496). Both cremations and inhumations of late Roman date have also been recorded from sites further south, suggesting a change in use and perhaps an abandonment of settlement over at least part of the area.

4.11 The site is situated alongside two principal Roman roads within the town, on the west side of Bleachfield Street at the New Inn, 25 Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 7325, Warwickshire Museum 1992) observation of foundation trenches revealed part of the Roman road which probably ran along the line of the present High Street in the defended area (WA SMR 451). This road runs through the site and joined an west-east road WA 446 (Fig. 1) to the south-west (Lines 1992). It may then have extended to the south-west to Ryknild Street (SMR WA 445) or the river .

4.12 Three new house plots to the south-east of the site were subject to recording in 1987 (SMR WA 7205). The foundations of a stone building were revealed , along with a dump of painted wall plaster and an assemblage of 1st century pottery (Cracknell 1987). Part of the Roman road (SMR WA 446) was also revealed at this point.

4.13 On the east side of Bleachfield Street an excavation by P. Booth at No. 64 in 1981 revealed a complex sequence of deposits (SMR WA 3791). Pre-Flavian (68-96 AD) timber buildings were abandoned and replaced by a road which ran parallel to Bleachfield Street and Roman road (SMR WA 451). This survived until AD 125 and possibly to the end of the 2nd century. Late Roman activity was not present on the site although upper deposits were heavily disturbed by post-medieval construction (Booth 1989).

4.14 B. W. Davis opened a series of ten trenches within the Allotments east of Bleachfield Street in 1925 (SMR WA 521). P. Chatwin recorded that during these excavations Davis found a gravel road aligned parallel to Bleachfield Street (SMR WA 516). The trenches within this area also encountered at least two major buildings although insufficient information survives regarding their exact locations other than that they were probably in the south-east corner of the Allotments.

4.15 H. V. Hughes seems to have also excavated in this area. No plan showing Hughes' eleven trenches survives, but the published description implies considerable excavations (Hughes 1960, 10-18). The Roman Stratford road (SMR WA 446) was built over by a large building suspected of being a fourth century winged corridor type villa, complete with hypocaust (SMR WA 3884), probably the same one mentioned earlier by Davis.

Medieval and Later

4.16 Alcester may have been the site of a settlement in the late Saxon period being sometimes identified as that "celebrated place called Alne" where an ecclesiastical council was held in AD704 (VCH 1945, 12), but this is far from certain. There is some slight evidence of Saxon activity in the Bleachfield Street area. A sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from a ditch fill during excavations in Lloyds Bank gardens in 1975. During the excavations at Lloyds Bank in 1997 five sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery were found in the fill of a modern gully.

4.17 The site lies within the medieval town of Alcester, which was concentrated to the north around the present High Street. Evidence of medieval activity in the vicinity comes from the "Explosion" site which revealed a rectangular structure dating to the 13th and 14th centuries (SMR WA 5490). Burnt pebbles and a wall foundation associated with a 17th century house fronting on to Bleachfield Street were also revealed (SMR WA 7256 not shown in Fig. 1). Observations at the New Inn in 1992 revealed a pit containing medieval pottery and a large group of horn cores (SMR WA 7326 not shown in Fig. 1). It is known that in the medieval period Alcester had become a thriving town once again.

4.18 The medieval burgage plots fronting on to the line of the existing High Street formed a series of extended narrow properties which continued along the north end of Bleachfield Street. The surviving lines of these boundaries may be seen on estate maps of 1752 (Sutton) (Fig. 2) and 1760 (Eyre). The estate maps show the properties stretching back to the approximate line of Birch Abbey where there was probably an informal back lane at the rear of the properties. The site could have been associated with several of these properties. A medieval malting kiln and a series of pits and post holes were revealed during the excavations to the rear of 27-33 Bleachfield Street (Booth and Evans 2001).

4.19 In the 18th and 19th centuries the western side of Bleachfield Street was largely occupied by houses with outbuildings and rear gardens (Fig. 3). Examples of contemporary buildings remain on the eastern side and northern end of Bleachfield Street. The front of the site would have been occupied by houses, including 27-33 Bleachfield Street. The First Edition map of 1886 shows works buildings on the southern part of the site and part of these are labelled Cycle Works on the Second Edition map of 1905 (Fig. 3).

5. Evaluation Trenches

5.1 The evaluation trenches (numbered 1-8) were dug in positions set out in the archaeological brief or in amended positions agreed with the Planning Archaeologist (Fig. 2). The trenches were excavated to a depth of between 0.70m and 1.65m down to significant archaeological features, deposits or natural sands and gravel. Natural deposits were revealed in all the trenches and the depth of stratigraphy was assessed; however not all the trenches were completely excavated down to natural deposits and where appropriate deposits were not disturbed or removed completely.

5.2 A description of the evaluation trenches is provided below with a summary of levels of significant deposits. These levels are spot heights (related to Ordnance Datum) derived from recorded sections, plans or site survey data.

5.3 Dating for the site is provided by spot dating of the pottery assemblage by Jeremy Evans. The dating is provisional and may be refined following the analysis of the samian assemblage.



Fig. 4 Site plan showing location of evaluation Trenches 1-8 and other recent excavations in the development area

Trench 1

Existing ground surface	41.65m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy*	41.20m OD
Level of significant features	40.60m OD
Top of natural deposit	40.60m OD

5.4 The trench was situated in a packing area of a warehouse building (Fig. 4). The trench was limited to 3.8m in length due to the proximity of working machinery and load-bearing walls. The natural sands and gravel (107) were revealed at between c. 40.60m OD and 40.45m OD with a slight slope south-west to north-east. The natural deposit was composed of orange brown sand with frequent rounded gravel pebbles.

5.5 Two features were revealed at the western end of the trench (Trench 1, Fig. 5). A 0.65m long gully (103) which was aligned roughly south to north and terminated in the middle of the trench. The feature contained a dark grey silty fill (104), which was 0.2m deep with fragments of metalworking slag and 1st and early 2nd century pottery (Section A, Fig. 5). Adjacent to gully (103) was a second feature, probably a hearth (105). This was roughly circular in plan, 0.4m long and 0.34m wide. This feature was also shallow, less than 0.10m deep and filled with a dark grey silt (106), which contained no inclusions, but showed evidence of burning and was very compacted.

5.6 The revealed features were sealed by an extensive, 1.0m thick, layer of grey brown sandy loam (102), which was identified across the full extent of the trench. Roman and post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper part of the deposit. The lower 0.4m of layer 102 contained only fragments of 1st and 2nd century pottery, *possibly indicating that a Roman deposit sealed the natural gravel. However it was not possible to distinguish two different deposits in either section or in plan. The deposits were sealed beneath a sand and mortar layer (101), probably a make-up deposit for the existing concrete floor (100). Layer 101 contained several fragments of 19th/20th century and Roman pottery.

Trench 2

Existing ground surface	41.10m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	40.30m OD
Level of significant features	40.15m OD
Top of natural deposit	40.10m OD

5.7 Trench 2 was relocated from its original position indicated in the brief following liaison with the client and the agreement of the Planning Archaeologist. It remained within the factory building, but was moved 5m southwards (Fig. 4) closer to the location of previous work (AL28, Trench 1) on the site (Cracknell 1998).

5.8 The 4.4m long and 1.6m wide trench was excavated in the corner of the working factory area. A live electricity cable (206) was revealed at the south-western end of the trench, as a result deposits were not removed from beneath it and a "step" was left at this end of the trench (Section B, Fig. 5).

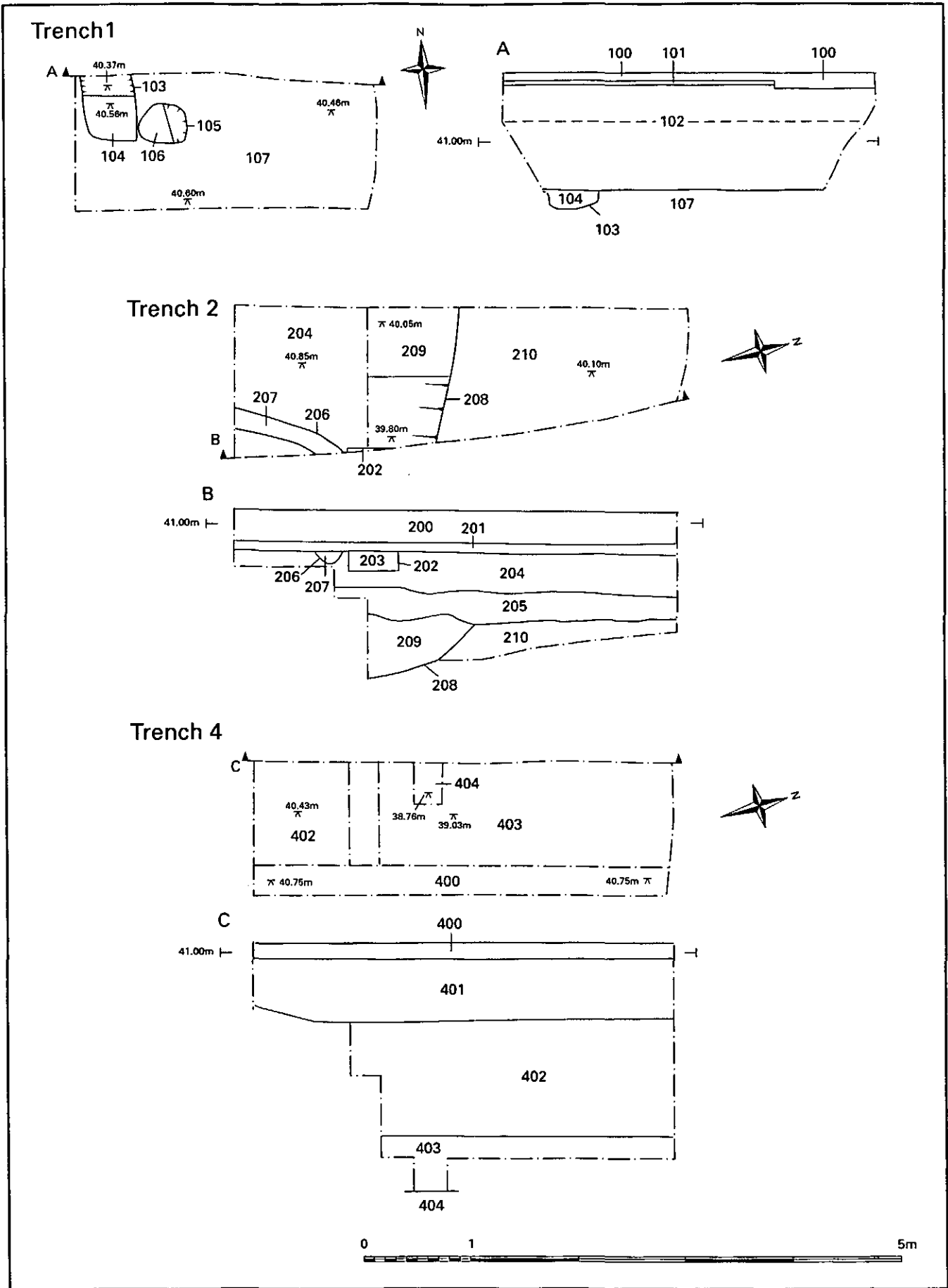


Fig. 5: Trench 1, 2 and 4 with sections A-C

5.9 Natural gravels (210) were revealed in the remainder of the trench. The brown sands and gravel were partly excavated to a depth of 0.3m to confirm the nature of the deposit. No finds were recovered, but the gravel was cut by a single feature.

5.10 A probable linear cut (208) extended across the trench, but its full extent was not revealed (Trench 2, Fig. 5). This possible ditch was at least 1m wide and 0.45m deep. The ditch was filled with a dark grey sandy loam (209) at least 0.6m thick, which contained late 1st/2nd century pottery, animal bone and a fragment of imported German lava quern.

5.11 Over the ditch was a layer of greyish brown sandy loam (205) was revealed in the trench. This was sealed by a 0.38m thick layer of dark grey sandy loam (204). Both were undated, but 205 could be interpreted as Romano-British.

5.12 A modern foundation cut (202) was orientated west to east and extended across the trench. The foundation cut was filled with ash and brick fragments (203). A 0.12m thick layer of brick rubble (201) provided a make-up deposit for concrete (200) which forms the floor of the factory.

Trench 3

Existing ground surface	41.20m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	None
Level of significant features	None
Top of natural deposit	40.50m OD

5.13 A 3.5m long and 1.6m wide trench was excavated in the rear of the SGL Carbon Group factory (Fig. 4). This trench was originally intended to be 10m long, but was reduced due to the proximity of working machinery and live services. Natural sands and gravel were revealed at between 40.50m and 40.30m OD. No finds or features were exposed in the top of the deposit. A small area was excavated to a depth of 0.35m into the gravel, but no finds were revealed.

5.14 Above the gravel concrete and make up deposits were revealed, including the concrete forming the existing factory floor. No other archaeological deposits or features were revealed in the trench. No artefacts were recovered during the work in the trench.

Trench 4

Existing ground surface	41.15m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	40.90m OD
Level of significant features	40.45m OD
Top of natural deposit	38.76m OD

5.15 A 4m long and 1.6m wide trench was excavated in the southern works building of David Hart Limited (Fig. 4). The northern end of the trench was located immediately adjacent to the works entrance and as fork lift truck access was required the trench was shortened at this point.

5.16 Natural brownish yellow sands and gravel (404) were encountered in a small area at the base of the trench at a level of 38.76m OD. A greater area of natural was not revealed due to health and safety considerations. No features were identified within the trench, however the revealed deposits were interpreted as possible fill material. On the eastern side of the trench deeper concrete, possibly associated with a drain or foundations, was revealed below the floor slab.

5.17 A 0.6m thick deposit of grey silty loam (403) was revealed over the natural gravel. This contained 2nd century pottery and two ornamental pins, a bone hairpin and a copper alloy ?dress pin. Above this was a 0.9m thick deposit of brown sandy loam (402) containing animal bone, late 3rd and 4th century pottery (Section C, Fig. 5). Both deposits extended beyond the limits of the trench and no edges were defined, but it is likely that these filled a large feature, such as a quarry pit.

5.18 A 0.3m thick layer of greyish brown sandy loam (401) extended over the trench and contained late 3rd-4th century pottery. This may be a late Roman dump deposit, it was however directly beneath modern concrete (400), which formed the floor surface of the building.

Trench 5

Existing ground surface	41.25m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	40.50m OD
Level of significant features	40.50m OD
Top of natural deposit	40.10m OD

5.19 Trench 5 was located immediately outside the Abbey Works building in a yard area at the front of the site (Fig. 4). The trench was 20m long and 1.6m wide extending north-west to south-east towards an electricity substation fronting on to Bleachfield Street.

5.20 At the north-west end of the trench a brick rubble filled cellar (501) was revealed (Fig. 6). This was a minimum 3.4m long and 2.2m wide and extended beyond the limit of the trench. Brick wall foundations were revealed running north-west to south-east along the edge of the trench and at right angles across it. The brick rubble back fill was at least 1.9m deep. The remains of an iron tank or boiler was revealed towards the base of the probable cellar. No archaeological deposits were revealed at this end of the trench. The brickwork was recorded, but no further excavation was carried out in this part of the trench where archaeological deposits had been completely removed.

5.21 Natural gravel (535) was revealed across the remainder of the trench at 40.10m OD. The orange/brown sandy gravel layer was cut by a series of Roman features (Section D, Fig. 6).

5.22 The northern edge of a possible small pit was revealed (Fig. 6) The partially revealed pit (505) was 1m long and 0.25m wide filled with brown sandy loam (506). The fill contained late 1st/2nd century pottery and a large fragment of *mortarium*. A second shallow feature (513) was revealed partially in section on the south side of the trench. This was probably a small sub-circular pit, 0.48m in diameter, cut into the natural gravels. The fill, a dark grey sandy silt (514) contained fragments of animal bone and early 2nd century pottery.

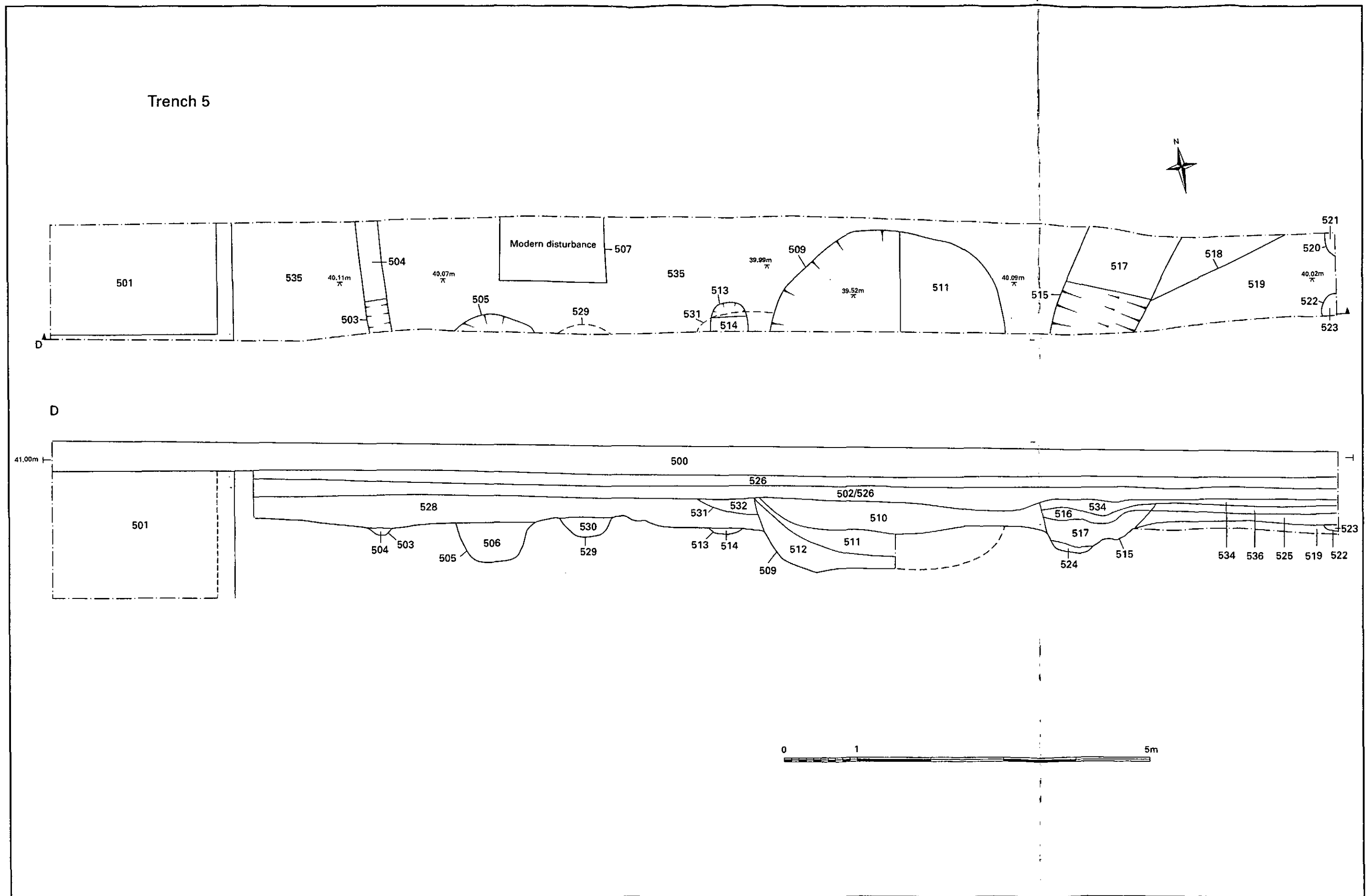


Fig. 6: Trench 5 and Section D showing archaeological deposits

5.23 A 0.30m wide undated slot (503) extended across the trench and was orientated north-west to south-east. The 1.5m long slot was partially excavated (Section D, Fig. 6) revealing it to be 0.1m deep with a flat base. The slot was filled with a brown sandy loam (504).

5.24 A small pit (529) was revealed partially in section immediately south-east of pit (505). The probable pit was approximately 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep filled with dark grey brown sandy silt loam (530).

5.25 The northern half of a larger circular pit (509) was revealed in the centre of the trench. The pit was approximately 3.1m in diameter and 0.6m deep (Section D, Fig. 6). The pit was partially excavated revealed a 0.35m thick lower fill of brown sandy loam (512, 533), which contained animal bone and 2nd century pottery. Upper fills of dark brown sandy loam (511) and dark grey sandy silt loam (510) also contained animal bone and late 2nd century pottery.

5.26 A steep-sided "U-shaped" ditch (515) was partially excavated towards the south-east end of the trench (Trench 5, Fig. 6). This was orientated north to south and extended beyond the limits of the trench. The ditch was 1.48m wide and 0.72m deep and contained a series of fills. The lower fill (524) was a brown sandy loam and probably represents the initial silting of the ditch. This contained late 1st and 2nd century pottery. The upper fills, a dark grey brown sandy loam (517) and brown sandy loam (516) probably represent the backfilling of the ditch (Section D, Fig. 6) and contained 2nd century pottery. There was no evidence for a recut of the ditch, and it probably cut ditch (518). This was aligned north-west to south-east and was only partially revealed in the evaluation trench. The fills of ditch 518, a dark grey brown sandy loam (519), (525) and probably a brown sandy loam (536) were similar to the fills of ditch (515) making it difficult to interpret the exact sequence. A 0.10m thick layer of dark grey brown sandy loam (534) appeared to seal both ditches.

5.27 An extensive layer of graphite debris and soil was revealed across the trench (numbered 502 and 527). This was sealed by a 0.12m thick layer of concrete (526) which extended from cellar (501) to the eastern limit of the trench. This may have formed a previous yard surface or the floor of a previous building. The concrete was covered by a 0.35m thick layer of modern soil and brick rubble (500) which formed the ground surface where a concrete yard surface was not present.

5.28 At the northern side of the trench was a modern cut (507) associated with the drain pipe of the existing building (Fig. 7). The steep-sided cut was probably machine excavated as a sump through the concrete and lower stratigraphy. The sump was then backfilled with brick rubble and gravel (508).

Trench 6

Existing ground surface	42.10m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	41.70m OD
Level of significant features	41.70m OD
Top of natural deposit	41.66-41.80m OD

5.29 Trench 6 was located at the western limit of the site to the rear of the existing factory building and adjacent to Birch Abbey (Fig. 4). The trench was 11m long and 1.6m wide extending north to south. The southern end of the trench was truncated by a modern drain.

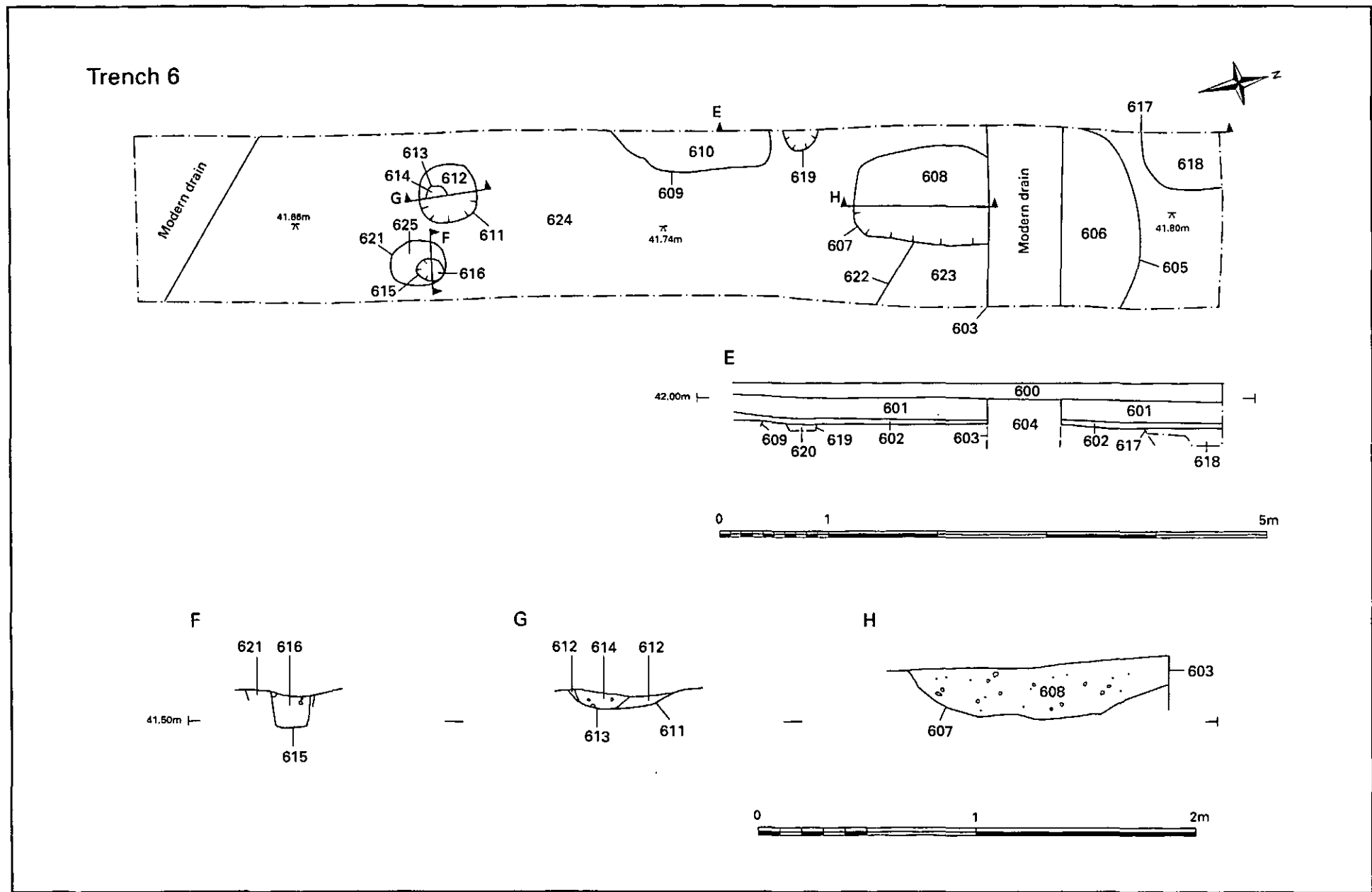


Fig. 7: Trench 6 and Sections E, F, G and H

5.30 Natural gravel (624) was revealed at approximately 41.7m OD across the trench except where the layer was truncated by Roman or modern features. The gravel layer was sloped slightly from north to south and may have been subject to extensive truncation during possible landscaping or construction.

5.31 To the north of a modern drain a 1.6m long and 0.7m wide feature (605) was revealed. The greyish brown sandy loam fill (606) contained a 2nd century copper alloy coin. This probable rubbish pit also contained fragments of animal bone. The similarity of fills may also suggest that these formed one large pit.

5.32 Two possible pits were truncated by a modern drain at the northern end of the trench. The southern edge of a 0.7m wide pit (622) was revealed. The greyish brown sandy loam fill (623) was not fully excavated.

5.33 Two probable pits were also revealed at the western edge of the trench. Pit (617) in the north-western corner of the trench was at least 0.6m long and 0.5m wide. The fill (618) contained Roman pottery and animal bone and was at least 0.15m deep. The pit may be similar to rectilinear pit (607). This pit was 0.8m wide, 0.25m deep and at least 1.2m long (Section H, Fig. 9), the northern end of the pit was truncated by a modern drain (604). The fill (608) contained late 1st/early 2nd century pottery, iron nails and a fragment of vessel glass.

5.34 A series of post holes and pits were revealed; these included two adjacent postholes in the southern half of the trench (Fig. 7). Post hole (611) was circular and 0.5m in diameter. The fill (612) included evidence for a 0.2m diameter post pipe (613) at the southern side of the cut. The post setting was 0.1m deep and filled with a dark grey brown sandy loam (614) (Section G, Fig. 7). Immediately to the east was a second post hole (621) this had similar characteristics, but slightly smaller at 0.4m in diameter. The fill of the posthole (625) also contained evidence for a 0.2m diameter post pipe (616). The post pipe or setting was 0.16m deep and contained a dark grey brown sandy loam (616) (Section F, Fig. 7). A third undated post hole (619) was partially revealed at the western edge of the trench. This was approximately 0.3m in diameter.

5.35 No Roman stratigraphy survived in the trench and all features and the natural deposit were sealed beneath a layer of greyish brown silt clay (602), which was probably a modern dump. This was overlain by hardcore or make-up deposit (601) for Tarmac surfacing (600) for the yard area, which incorporated two modern drains. The ground surface rose from the southern end of the trench where it was adjacent to the bottom of a ramp providing access to the road (Birch Abbey). There was a notable difference between the yard surface and the present road surface of approximately 1.1m. This difference probably indicates some landscaping or terracing during previous construction on the site.

5.36 The fills of the various features were generally firm or compacted and this may be the result of truncation and construction of the yard area.

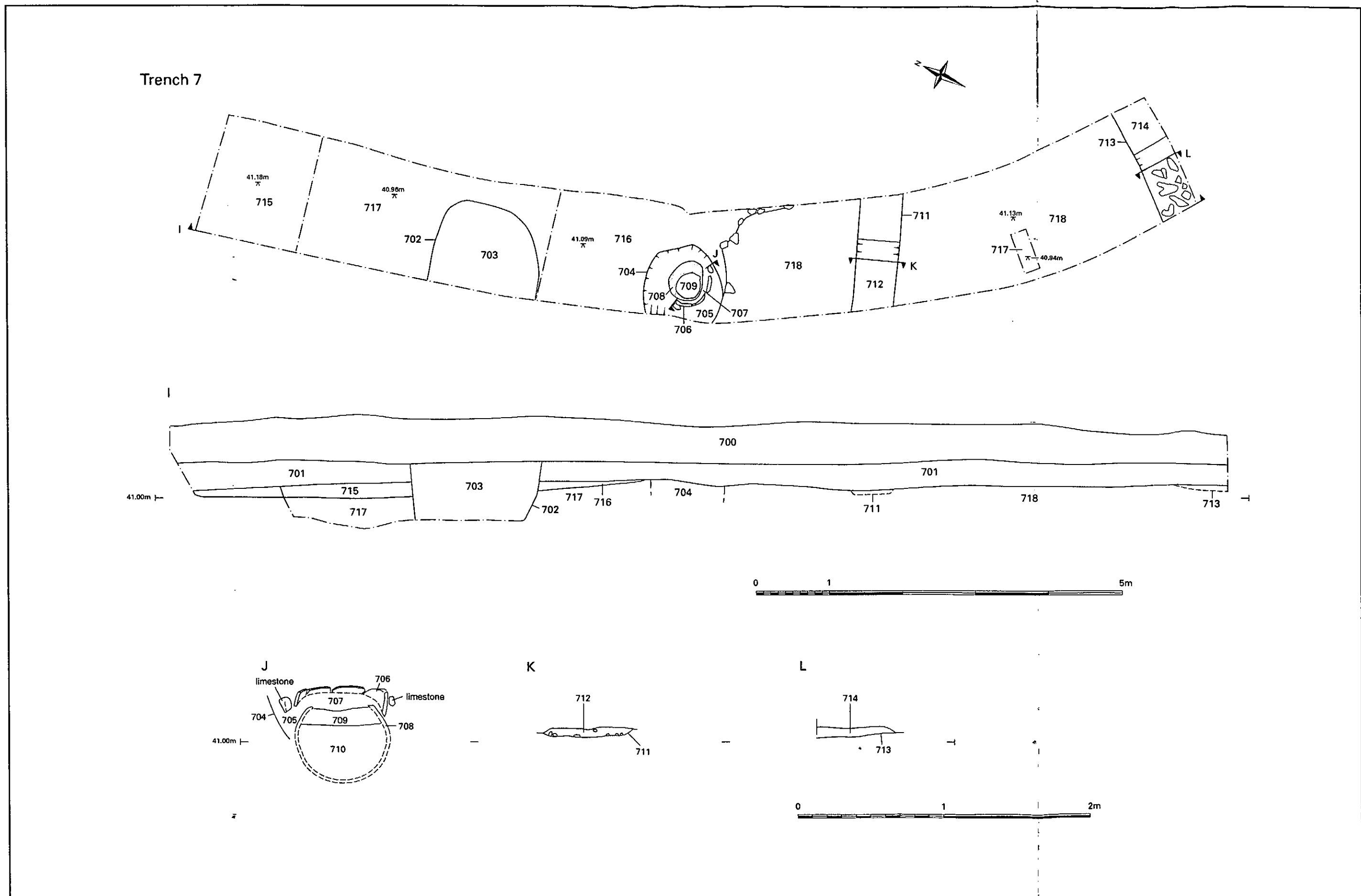


Fig. 8: Trench 7 and Sections I, J, K and L

Trench 7

Existing ground surface	42.00m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	41.45m OD
Level of significant features	41.30m OD
Top of natural deposit	41.20m OD

5.37 Trench 7 was situated in the rear garden area to the west of the factory buildings (Fig. 4). The trench was 15m long and 1.6m wide and was angled slightly off a north-west to south-east alignment in order to avoid the removal of a large tree.

5.38 Natural gravel (717) was revealed at the northern end of the trench. The brown sand and gravel was revealed in plan at the north end of the trench and partly excavated in a small sondage at the southern end of the trench. No features or finds were associated with the gravel at this point (Fig. 8). A 0.3m thick layer of gravel (715) overlay the natural deposit (Section I, Fig. 8). This was 1.6m wide and extended beyond the limits of the trench. The deposit contained no finds and may be a variation of the natural gravel. However, the deposit was sufficiently compact to be interpreted as a possible yard or road surface.

5.39 An extensive metallised surface of compacted pebbles (718) extended for 8m to the southern end of the trench. It was not clear whether this represented an internal floor of a building or an external surface.

5.40 Cutting 718 at the southern end of the trench was a shallow linear cut (713). This possible ditch or gully was 0.15m deep and extended for 1.6m aligned west to east. The feature contained a dark grey sandy loam fill (714) with 2nd century pottery and a large quantity of animal bone, including cattle scapulas spread throughout the deposit. A second shallow gully (711), aligned west to east, occurred 3.3m further to the north. This was 0.6m wide and 0.07m deep and contained a black sandy loam fill (712) with 2nd century pottery.

5.41 In the middle of the trench a large, almost complete amphora (708) was revealed set in the ground (Section J, Fig. 8). The globular amphora (Dressel 20) was upright set in a large pit (704), which appeared to be roughly circular in plan (Fig. 10) and 0.9m in diameter and 1.1m deep. The vessel survived with damage around the top where rim and handles were missing. Two fills were contained within the amphora, the lower fill was a pale brown sandy clay loam (710) which, contained bird bones, oyster shell and other small animal bones (Section J, Fig. 8). The upper fill (709), a black sandy loam, also contained animal bone and 2nd/3rd century pottery fragments. A 100% sample was taken of these fills (Fig. 9) in order to retrieve evidence of other small animal bones or any charred material.

5.42 Around the top of the first amphora were fragments of a second amphora or storage jar (706). This survived only on the western side where large body sherds were set in the ground. It is possible this vessel was inverted over the first amphora and the base has been damaged and removed. A dark grey sandy loam deposit (707) filled part of the pit and was revealed between the two vessels.

5.43 A dark grey sandy loam (705) filled the pit and contained fragments of limestone, three or four of which were apparently used as packing around the outer storage jar.



Fig. 9: Amphora 708 during excavation and sampling



Fig. 10: Amphora (708) and pit (704)

5.44 Around pit (704) was a compact deposit, including mortar and limestone fragments with pea gravel (716). This was 0.8m wide and may be a floor surface cut by pit 704 or directly associated with the amphora (708). It was probably truncated on the north side by a modern pit (702), but it did not appear to extend further north.

5.45 A large modern pit (702), at least 0.8m deep and 1.6m wide cut through upper deposits and into the natural gravels. The fill (703) contained paint tins and other debris indicating modern nature of the pit. The pit probably removed the edge of surface (716) and the possible relationship between layers (716) and (715).

5.46 A layer of black sandy loam (701) extended across the trench, this was 0.36m thick and was probably an earlier garden or horticultural deposit. It contained late 3rd century pottery. Above this a 0.6m thick layer of topsoil (700) was encountered. This probably represents both recent garden soil and topsoil developed over a longer period.

Trench 8

Existing ground surface	41.55m OD
Top of surviving Roman stratigraphy	40.60m OD
Level of significant features	40.35m OD
Top of natural deposit	39.90m OD

5.47 Trench 8 was 10m long and 1.6m wide and located at the northern end of the site adjacent to the office building in the current car parking area (Fig. 4). Natural sands and gravel (820) were revealed at the eastern end of the trench at 39.9m OD. The natural layer was similar to natural deposits elsewhere on the site and was also cut by several Roman features. A deposit of sand and gravel (827) was partially revealed and this was interpreted on site as a make-up deposit for gravel surface (816). It is possible that this may be part of the natural gravels on site.

5.48 A post hole (817) was revealed at the southern edge of the trench. This was sub-circular and approximately 0.3m in diameter (Section M, Fig. 11) filled with dark greyish brown sandy silt (818).

5.49 To the west of the ditch (810) was a metalled surface (819) formed of compacted gravel. This was 0.20m thick and a minimum of 1.7m wide. The excavated area showed that its eastern limit was represented by the ditch (810) and it is most likely to be a north-south orientated road. The full width of the road was not determined, but is likely to be approximately 5-6m. A further gravel surface (816) was revealed at the western end of the trench (Section M, Fig. 11). This 0.3m thick light brown sandy gravel overlaid 819 and may represent a later phase of road surfacing or possibly a floor surface of a building.

5.50 A layer of grey clay (822) may be part of an undated layer or possibly the remnants of an earlier ditch. To the east of 822 was the western edge of the a north-south ditch (815) was revealed. The probable ditch was a minimum 0.34m deep filled by a dark grey sandy silt (824). The other side of the ditch was not present and may be the result the original ditch being subsequently recut by ditch (810).

5.51 A 1.25m wide ditch (810) orientated south to north appeared to extend across the width of the trench (Fig. 11). A segment of the steep-sided cut was excavated and grey silty clay fills (823) and (825) contained later 1st and 2nd century pottery. The

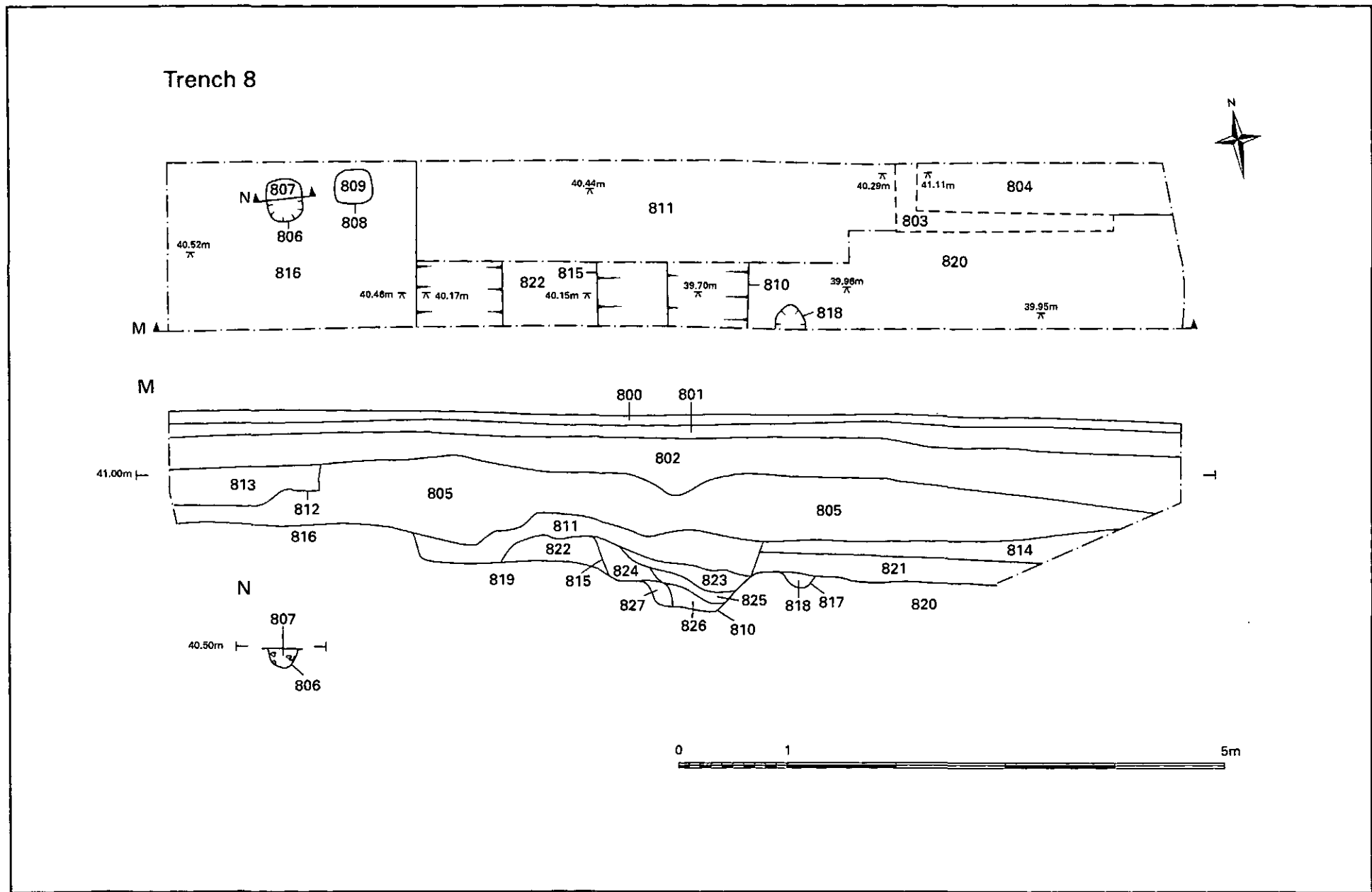


Fig. 11: Trench 8 and Sections M and N



Fig. 12: Trench 8 during excavation of gravel surface (816)

lower fill (826) contained no finds and the ditch was at least 0.45m deep. A layer of dark grey sandy silt (811) seals both ditches. This deposit contained a large amount of late 3rd century pottery and it may have been dumped into the largely filled in ditches.

5.52 To the east of ditch (810) and cut by the ditch was a layer of dark greyish brown sandy silt loam (821). This layer was 0.25m thick and extended over 2.8m to the end of the trench. Over this was another layer, also cut by the ditch, composed of brown sandy clay (814). The 0.18m thick layer contained no finds and the two layers (Section M, Fig. 11) may be dump deposits or possibly occupation layers.

5.53 Two post holes were cut into the gravel. Both were sub-rectangular in shape and located 0.3m apart (Trench 8, Fig. 11). Post hole (806) was 0.4m long, 0.3m wide and 0.15m deep (Section N, Fig. 11). It was filled with a dark grey sandy silt loam (807). To the east was post hole (808) which was 0.34m long and 0.3m wide and contained a dark grey sandy silt fill (809).

5.54 A possibly square pit (812), approximately 1.35m wide, cut layer 805. The pit was revealed partly in section and had vertical sides and was 0.34m deep. The fill (813), a grey ashy silt contained clinker and brick fragments and 19th/20th century pottery.

5.55 At the eastern end of the trench a concrete footing (803) and brick wall foundation (804) truncated archaeological deposits as the base was cut into the natural gravel. The foundation was 2.4m long and 0.5m wide and was aligned west to east. It extended beyond the eastern and northern limits of the trench and probably formed the footings for a previous 20th century building. A layer of brick rubble (802) may represent a demolition deposit following the demolition of houses, including 27-33 Bleachfield Street, which would have fronted the street in this part of the site. A deposit of hardcore (801) and Tarmac (800) represent the modern surfacing of the car park.

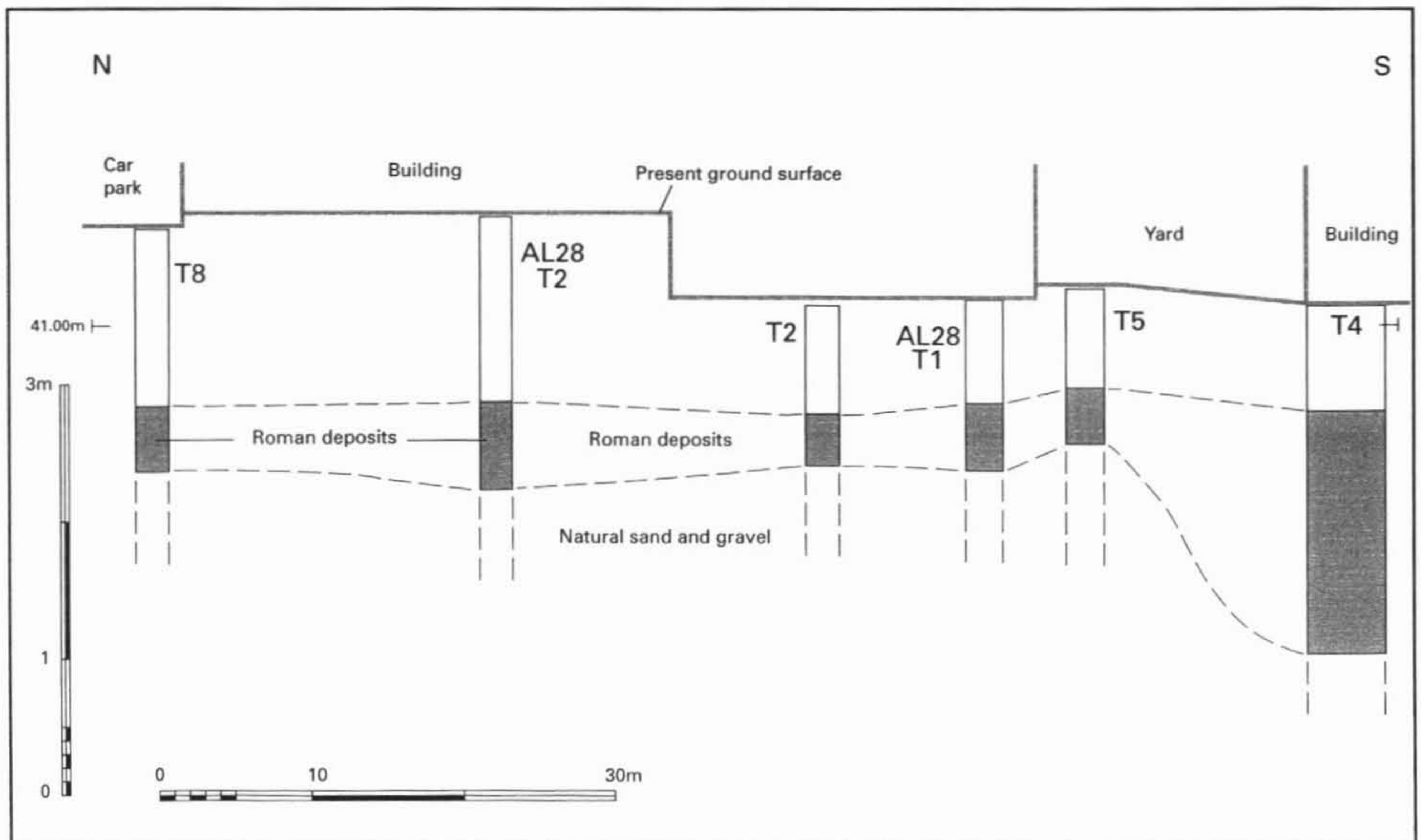


Fig. 13: Schematic section across the site showing depths of deposits

6. Conclusions

6.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed archaeological features and artefacts associated with occupation and activity in the Roman period in seven of the eight trenches. Roman deposits were known to survive on the site and similar deposits and features were anticipated. However, the evaluation showed that the survival and density of Roman features across the site was probably more extensive than previously suggested, particularly at the northern and western limits of the site.

6.2 The topography of the site during the Roman period appears to generally similar to the modern ground; although there may have been a slight slope downwards from west to east. The modern ground surface partially reflects this, the spot height on Birch Abbey road is 42.30m OD and at Bleachfield Street it is approximately 41.00m. Differing levels were recorded within the factories indicating that there was some difference in construction levels when they were constructed (Fig. 13). The level of natural deposits between 41.70m to 38.9m OD this may also illustrate variations in deposit survival and localised anomalies.

6.3 There are some localised areas of truncation caused by deep modern activity, including the cellar in Trench 5. There may have been some widespread truncation of deposits across the south-western part of the site as the result of some slight terracing or levelling during the construction of the factories or the previous houses. The results from Trench 3 and 6 do show that construction may have removed all deposits from above the natural gravel, including potential Roman deposits and possibly the surface of the natural gravel. This may have also caused the removal of potential features and indeed no features were revealed in Trench 3, although this may partly reflect the limited area available. However, the results from Trench 6 clearly show that a variety of features, including pits and post holes cutting the natural do survive in this part of the site. The survival of archaeological remains beneath the factory building was also suggested by Cracknell (Warwickshire Museum 1989), however this evaluation shows that significant features are likely to survive over the western and southern parts of the site.

6.4 There was no direct evidence revealed for the suggested fort, but slots and post holes revealed could belong to a military phase. As the 1st century pottery recovered in Trenches 1 and 5 during the evaluation and finds during previous work on the site do suggest a possible military presence (Booth and Evans 2001). The suggested fort may therefore still survive on part of the site. The question of whether there is a fort in this location is of great importance to the understanding of the development of Roman Alcester.

6.5 Previous work at the northern edge of the site recorded evidence for building and road surfaces (Booth and Evans 2001). The results of the evaluation from Trench 8 confirmed that phases of road alignments and buildings are likely to be present across the northern half and most probably the central area of the site. Trench 7 also indicated that occupation, including possible floor surfaces continued into the north-western corner of the site. This may represent a continuation of gravel and metalled surfaces recorded in 1969 (Taylor 1969).

6.6 The amphora may have been set in the ground and used for storage. The initial examination of the material inside the amphora shows that it contains a large quantity of egg shell as well as chicken bone and other small animal bone including shrew. Further work on the contents is necessary, but the amphora may alternatively have had a ritual use.

6.7 The southern half of the site produced little evidence for structures or buildings, although one possible beamslot was revealed in Trench 5. Otherwise a significant quantity of pits and ditches were revealed, particularly in Trench 5. These suggest a concentration of occupation evidence during the 2nd century AD probably around the north-south roads crossing the site. The road was not revealed in Trench 5 probably indicating a north-east to south-west alignment.

6.8 The Roman activity on the site continues until at least the late 3rd and 4th century. Evidence of later activity was identified in deposits in Trench 4 and features in Trenches 7 and 8. The later Roman activity is less obvious and the extensive deposits identified in many of the trenches appear to include Roman finds, but it not certain if these represent dark earth deposits or later reworking of such deposits during post-Roman horticultural activities.

6.9 The evaluation indicated a lack of evidence for activity on the site during the post-Roman and medieval periods. However medieval activity, including a malting kiln was recorded at the northern end of the site in 1969 and 1972 (Booth and Evans 2001). It is likely that parts of the site may have remained as open ground until the 17th or 18th century. The thicker buried soil horizons identified in several trenches may have been horticultural soils developed over this period. Additional soils may have been created at the rear of houses fronting Bleachfield Street during domestic gardening on the site from the 18th century to the modern period.

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Warwickshire Museum forthcoming *Archaeological excavation at flood defences at Newport Drive and Willow Close*

Appendix A: Sites recorded on Warwickshire SMR in vicinity of site

(Referred to in text or shown in Fig. 1)

<i>SMR Ref</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>NGR</i>
WA 446	Road	Romano-British	SP 085557
WA 451	Road	Romano-British	SP 087569
WA 490	Pits	Romano-British	SP 08755729
WA 495	Road	Romano-British	SP 0805785
WA 496	Settlement	Romano-British	SP 08855727
WA 497	Building	Romano-British	SP 08775722
WA 498	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08745720
WA 499	Building	Romano-British	SP 088845724
WA 500	Building	Romano-British	SP 08825717
WA 501	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08925723
WA 502	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08805717
WA 503	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08785715
WA 505	Pottery	Romano-British	SP 08825710
WA 506	Defences	Romano-British	SP 08905745
WA 511	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08875714
WA 512	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08845709
WA 516	Road	Romano-British	SP 08955707
WA 521	Building	Romano-British	SP 08935707
WA 3786	Building	Romano-British	SP 08895709
WA 3787	Building	Romano-British	SP 08995719
WA 3788	Settlement	Romano-British	SP 08775722
WA 3791	Building	Romano-British	SP 08895709
WA 3793	Gravel surface	Romano-British	SP 08725721
WA 3794	Settlement	Romano-British	SP 088571
WA 3883	Building	Romano-British	SP 08865722
WA 3884	Building	Romano-British	SP 08935712
WA 4476	Building	Romano-British	SP 08695715
WA 4478	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08695715
WA 4479	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08845708
WA 4481	Buildings	Romano-British	SP 08715710
WA 4482	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08745715
WA 4485	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08745715
WA 4488	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08715710
WA 4489	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08765709
WA 4492	Pit	Neolithic	SP 08825717
WA 4495	Small town	Romano-British	SP 087573
WA 4874	Settlement surface	Romano-British	SP 08875719
WA 4899	Settlement features	Romano-British	SP 08895719
WA 5001	Defences	Romano-British	SP 078573
WA 5490	Building	Medieval	SP 08845724
WA 5491	Building	Romano-British	SP 08825717
WA 5498	Settlement features	Medieval	SP 08825717
WA 5837	Defences	Romano-British	SP 0895751
WA 7043	Settlement	Romano-British	SP 087572
WA 7205	Building	Romano-British	SP 08885707
WA 7325	Finds	Romano-British	SP 08875718
WA 7326	Assorted features	Medieval	SP 08570957
WA 7256	Finds	Medieval	SP 08885725

Appendix B: List of excavated contexts

Trench	Context	Description	Comments
1	100	Concrete	Factory floor
1	101	Layer	Make-up
1	102	Layer	
1	103	Pit	
1	104	Pit Fill (of 103)	
1	105	Pit	
1	106	Pit Fill (of 105)	
1	107	Natural	Gravel
2	200	Concrete	Factory floor
2	201	Layer	Brick Rubble
2	202	Foundation cut	
2	203	Fill of (202)	
2	204	Layer	
2	205	Layer	
2	206	Service trench	
2	207	Service pipe/cable	
2	208	? Pit	
2	209	Fill of pit (208)	
2	210	Natural	Sand and gravel
3	300	Concrete	Factory floor
3	301	Layer	Rubble
3	302	Layer	
3	303	Natural	Gravel
4	400	Concrete	Factory floor
4	401	Layer	
4	402	Layer	Possible pit fill
4	403	Layer	Possible pit fill
4	410	Natural	Sand and gravel
5	500	Make-up layer/ground surface	Hardcore
5	501	Brick wall foundation	Cellar
5	502	Layer	Same as 527
5	503	Gully	
5	504	Fill of gully (503)	
5	505	Pit	
5	506	Fill of pit (505)	
5	507	Cut	Modern sump
5	508	Fill of (507)	
5	509	Pit	
5	510	Fill of pit (509)	
5	511	Fill of pit (509)	
5	512	Fill of pit (509)	Same as 533
5	513	Ditch	
5	514	Fill of ditch (513)	
5	515	Ditch	
5	516	Fill of ditch (515)	
5	517	Fill of ditch (515)	
5	518	Ditch	

Trench	Context	Description	Comments
5	519	Fill of ditch (518)	
5	520	Pit	
5	521	Pit fill (of 520)	
5	522	?Pit	
5	523	Fill of ?Pit (522)	Unexcavated
5	524	Fill of ditch (515)	
5	525	Layer over 519	?? fill of (518)
5	526	Concrete	
5	527	Layer	Modern
5	528	Layer	
5	529	Pit	
5	530	Fill of pit (529)	
5	531	Pit	
5	532	Fill of pit (531)	
5	533	Fill of pit (509)	
5	534	Layer over 518 and 515	
5	535	Natural	
5	536	Layer over 519	?? fill of (518)
6	600	Tarmac	
6	601	Layer	Hardcore
6	602	Layer	
6	603	Drain cut	Modern
6	604	Fill of drain (603)	Modern
6	605	?Pit	
6	606	Fill of ?pit (605)	
6	607	Pit	
6	608	Fill of pit (607)	
6	609	Pit	
6	610	Fill of pit (609)	
6	611	Pit	
6	612	Fill of pit (611)	
6	613	Post hole	
6	614	Fill of post hole(613)	
6	615	Post hole	
6	616	Fill of post hole(615)	
6	617	Pit	
6	618	Fill of pit (617)	
6	619	Post hole	
6	620	Fill of post hole(619)	
6	621	Pit	
6	622	Pit	
6	623	Fill of pit (622)	
6	624	Natural	Gravel
6	625	Fill of pit (621)	
7	700	Concrete	
7	701	Layer	subsoil
7	702	Pit	
7	703	Fill of pit (702)	
7	704	Pit	
7	705	Fill of pit (704)	
7	706	Storage jar in 704	
7	707	Fill of pit (704)	
7	708	Amphora in 704	
7	709	Fill of amphora (708)	
7	710	Fill of amphora (708)	

Trench	Context	Description	Comments
7	712	Fill of Gully (711)	
7	713	Gully (713)	
7	714	Fill of gully (713)	
7	715	Gravel Metalled surface	
7	716	Mortar spread/surface	
7	717	Natural	
7	718	Gravel surface ?	
8	800	Tarmac	Car park surface
8	801	Rubble/hardcore	
8	802	Brick rubble	Demolition debris
8	803	Concrete foundation	
8	804	Brick wall	
8	805	Layer	
8	806	Post hole	
8	807	Fill of post hole (806)	
8	808	Post hole	
8	809	Fill of post hole (808)	
8	810	Ditch	
8	811	Layer	?Part of ditch fill
8	812	?Pit	Modern
8	813	Fill of (812)	Modern
8	814	Layer	
8	815	Ditch	
8	816	Gravel surface	?Road
8	817	Post hole	
8	818	Fill of post hole (817)	
8	819	Metalled surface	Road
8	820	Natural gravel	
8	821	Layer	
8	822	Fill of ditch	
8	823	Fill of ditch (810)	
8	824	Fill of ditch (815)	
8	825	Ditch fill (of 810)	
8	826	Ditch fill (of 810)	
8	827	Layer	Make-up deposit

Appendix C: List of finds

Trench	Context	Material	Quantity (fragments/ sherds)	Comment/ Date
1	101	Pottery	6	1st century, post- medieval (4)
1	102	Pottery	5	Late 1st-mid 2nd century
1	104	Slag	3	
1	104	Pottery	2	Late 1st- 2nd century
1	104	Glass	1	SF16
2	209	Pottery	57	AD 70-120
2	209	A.Bone	25	
2	209	Stone	1	Lava Quern
4	401	Pottery	10	Late 3rd-4th century
4	401	Tile	2	Roof
4	401	A.Bone	2	
4	402	Pottery	30	Late 3rd/early 4th century
4	402	Nails	1	Iron
4	402	Tile	1	Roof
4	402	A.Bone	31	
4	403	Pottery	37	AD 120-160
4	403	A.Bone	2	
4	403	Bone	1	Hairpin
4	403	Cu Alloy	1	Pin
4	403	Pottery	1	Stamped samian
5	506	Pottery	3	AD 60-120
5	506	A.Bone	3	
5	510	Pottery	38	AD 120-160
5	510	Nails	1	Iron
5	510	A.Bone	8	
5	511	Pottery	56	AD 160/180-200
5	511	Nails	1	Iron
5	511	Tile	4	Roof
5	511	A.Bone	12	
5	511	Glass	1	Vessel Fragment
5	512	Pottery	33	AD 138-160
5	512	A.Bone	14	
5	514	Pottery	6	AD 117-160
5	514	A.Bone	2	
5	516	Slag	1	
5	516	Pottery	23	AD 120-160
5	516	Nails	1	Iron
5	516	A.Bone	4	
5	517	Pottery	79	AD 120-160
5	519	Pottery	43	AD 140-200

Trench	Context	Material	Quantity	Comment/ Date
5	519	A.Bone	4	
5	524	Pottery	2	Late 1st/2nd century
6	606	Pottery	1	Roman
6	606	Tile	1	Brick
6	606	Coin	1	Cu Alloy
6	608	Pottery	9	Late 1st/early 2nd century
6	608	Glass	1	Vessel Fragment
6	608	Iron	3	Object
6	616	Pottery	1	Roman
6	618	Pottery	3	Roman
7	701	Pottery	20	Late 3rd century
7	701	Glass	1	Sf15
7	705	Pottery		Late 3rd century
7	705	Iron	1	Object
7	706	Pottery	13	Amphora, 1st/2nd century
7	708	Pottery	1	Amphora, 1st/2nd century
7	709	Pottery	27	Amphora
7	709/1	A Bone	22	Bird, small mammal
7	709/1	Shale	2	Bracelet fragments SF19, SF18
7	709/1	Glass	2	SF17, SF20
7	710/1	Pottery	46	Amphora fragments
7	710/1	A Bone	54	
7	712	Pottery	1	
7	712	A.Bone	6	AD 120+
7	714	Pottery	3	
7	714	A.Bone	9	AD 120+
8	Unstrat	Coin	1	Cu Alloy
8	802	Pottery	56	Post medieval
8	805	Pottery	3	2nd/early 3rd century
8	811	Pottery	182	Late 3rd century, residual 1st/2nd century
8	811	Tile	5	
8	811	A.Bone	2	
8	811	Iron	1	Object
8	811	Glass	1	Vessel Fragment
8	811	Stone	1	Tufa
8	813	Pottery	30	Post-medieval
8	823	Pottery	48	AD 70-120
8	823	A.Bone	2	
8	823	Tile	1	Roof
8	823	Iron	1	Object

Appendix D: Roman pottery by *Jeremy Evans*

Introduction

Some 749 sherds of Roman pottery from the site were presented for examination. All have been coded using the Warwickshire Museum fabric series into general fabric classes. The material ranges in date from the first century to the early-mid 4th century, but most is of later 1st to 2nd century date.

Pottery Assemblage

Table 1 shows the fabric proportions in the assemblage. It contains a considerable quantity of amphora, all Dressel 20, 8.7% by count and a massive 62.7% by weight. In part this is due to the largely complete Dressel 20 vessel containing bird bones which seems likely to be a ritual deposit from Context 708, however, if this is excluded from the calculation, Dressel 20 still amount to 4.6% of the assemblage by count and 16.3% by weight, suggesting quite a strong amphora supply. This is a much higher level than from Alcester Gas House Lane, although higher levels did come from early phases at 1-5 Bleachfield Street (Booth and Evans 2001). The levels from this site and Bleachfield Street would seem as comparable with those from military sites as those from small towns (cf Evans 2001, fig 11) and the figures from both these sites would not be inconsistent with a military origin, which has been postulated in this part of the town.

BB1, at 7.2%, is quite weakly represented, and this is consistent with the bulk of the material from the site being of 1st-2nd century date, whereas BB1 supply at Alcester peaked in the later 3rd century (Evans 1996). Colour-coated finewares are fairly poorly represented, again reflecting the low quantity of later Roman material in the collection. Trier 'Rhenish ware', Nene Valley colour-coated ware, Oxfordshire Red colour-coated ware, and south western Brown Slipped ware are all present in small quantities, as well as the local 2nd century roughcast ware F42.

Occasional sherds of Milton Keynes Pink Grogged ware (G11) are present in later Roman groups as are some sherds of Malvernian wheelmade ware (G46) as well as the commoner handmade Malvernian Metamorphic tempered ware (G44).

Mortaria include Verulamium and Oxford pieces, but Mancetter products are absent, whilst local 1st-2nd century products are strongly represented.

Severn Valley wares are very poorly represented, at 23.5%, again reflecting the predominantly early date of the assemblage with little later Roman material. Similarly reduced wares are very strongly present at 42.4%, including some examples of the organically tempered handmade storage jar fabric R31. Many of the reduced ware vessels are the typical Alcester waisted rustic ware jars, most of which are probably pre-Hadrianic.

Samian ware is quite strongly represented at 6.2% of the assemblage by count, but not outstandingly so, and the level is appropriate for a 'small town' assemblage. The level of decorated samian ware is a little on the low side, at around 20% and is certainly below the very high levels often found on military sites.

Table 2 shows a functional analysis of the assemblage by minimum numbers of rims, and also by Rim Equivalence, both methods correlating very closely. Jar levels are high for an urban site, at around 46%, and tableware levels comparatively low, putting the site on the edge of the urban range (cf Evans 2001, figs 5-7). As usual in

Table 1 Fabric proportions in the AL83 assemblage

Fabric	% Nosh	% Wt	% MV	% RE	% BE
A21 Dressel 20 Spanish Amphora	8.7	62.7	0	0	0
B01 Black Burnished ware	7.2	4.0	11.0	9.5	5.3
E00 Early grog tempered	0.7	0.1	0.9	0.7	0.5
F33 Rhenish ware	0.1	0.01	0	0	1.3
F42	0.3	0.1	0.9	1.2	0
F51 Oxfordshire colour-coated	0.5	0.2	0	0	3.2
F52 Nene Valley colour-coated	0.1	0.1	0	0	0
F59	0.8	0.3	0	0	5.3
G11 Pink Grogged ware	0.5	1.5	0	0	0.6
G44 Malvernian Metamorphic tempered ware	1.1	0.9	3.4	2.9	0
G46 Malvernian wheelmade ware	0.3	0.3	0.9	0.7	1.3
M21 Verulamium-region mortaria	0.1	1.6	0.9	2.7	0
M23 Oxford White mortaria	0.3	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.8
M37	0.3	0.3	0.9	1.3	0
M44 Oxfordshire	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7
O00 Oxidised	1.2	0.3	4.2	2.6	2.6
O20 Severn Valley	23.5	12.0	18.6	20.8	24.8
Q00 White slipped flagons	0.9	0.2	0	0	0
Q11 "	1.2	0.4	0	0	0
Q12 "	0.3	0.1	0	0	0
Q14 SW White Slipped ware	0.3	0.5	0	0	1.9
R00 Reduced	42.4	11.2	41.5	41.4	45.4
R31 Handmade reduced	1.7	1.1	0.9	0.9	0
S10 South Gaul samian	1.1	0.1	4.2	3.1	0
S20 Central Gaul samian Lezoux	4.5	0.8	7.6	8.3	6.4
S21 Central Gaul Les Martres-de-Veyre	0.1	0.01	0	0	0
S30 East Gaulish samian	0.5	0.2	1.7	1.9	0
W00 White Wares	0.8	0.1	0.9	0.9	0
W11 Verulamium Region White wares	0.3	0	0	0	0
N	749	39.617k g	118	1300%	1897%

Table 2 functional analysis of the AL83 assemblage

Flacons	Bottles	Constricted-necked jars	Storage jars	Wide-mouthed jars	Jars	Cups & beakers	Tankards	Bowls	Bowl/dish	Dishes	Mortaria	Lids	N
0.9%	0.9%	1.7%	0.9%	3.4%	42.4%	7.6%	6.8%	11.0%	0.9%	11.9%	3.4%	8.5%	118 rims
0.9%	1.2%	3.0%	0.9%	5.5%	42.5%	9.0%	5.8%	8.0%	0.3%	10.0%	5.2%	7.8%	1300%

the Severn Valley area drinking vessels are quite strongly represented, at around 15% (cf Evans 1996; Evans 2001, fig 7 for this).

Discussion

Overall this small group seems to have a similar composition to other groups recovered from this part of Alcester (cf Booth and Evans 2001), with large quantities of later first and second century material, but with quantities tailing off markedly in the 3rd and 4th centuries. The high quantities of amphora might support the suggestion of early military activity in this area, but this receives little further support from the samian assemblage or the functional composition of the group.

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