

Prebuilt / Roman
Address to SMR 23/3/05 IS-L

1998

Is there a report on the subsequent
W/B?? (DT?)

**An Archaeological Investigation at Fishbourne Road East,
Chichester, West Sussex:
Interim Report**

1998

Summary

Prior to the proposed construction of dwellings at Glebe Meadow, Fishbourne Road East, Chichester (centred NGR SU84180485), the developers, Geoffrey Osborne Limited, commissioned Southern Archaeology to carry out an archaeological investigation as detailed in a Specification for Archaeological Investigation (ref. JAPK FBGLEBE.SPE 18/09/97). The general aim of fieldwork was to record by excavation all archaeological deposits threatened with destruction by groundworks associated with the housing development and to record by plan and (where appropriate) sample excavation all archaeological deposits revealed but not threatened by such groundworks. The SAI proposed two distinct field methodologies: the monitoring by an archaeologist of all groundworks in areas outside the footprints of the dwellings and the total archaeological excavation of the footprints. This report gives the interim results of the latter.

Site location, topography, etc.

The site is a narrow, north/south strip of land bounded on the north by a railway line, on the west and south-west by an embanked section of the A27 and on the east by the gardens of properties on Albert Road and a local authority hostel known as Westward House. Currently a horse pasture, it lies on non-calcareous gley soils (mainly brickearth) and is approximately 400m north of the alluvial deposits of the head of Fishbourne Creek.

Archaeological background

Archaeological excavations carried out on the line of the A27 in 1983 (Cunliffe, Down and Rudkin, 1996) and on what was to become Westward House in 1992 (Kenny, 1992) established that the area is particularly rich in features of later prehistoric and Roman date, some of the latter clearly associated with Fishbourne Palace and others potentially with a pre-existing military site.

In 1995, when it was first proposed that Glebe Meadow be developed, Southern Archaeology carried out an evaluation of the site by trial trenching. The results (Wildman, 1995) confirmed that the types of archaeological features identified immediately to the west and east in 1983 and 1992 were also present at Glebe Meadow. Prehistoric finds included a single microlithic flint waste-flake, found on the surface of the brickearth subsoil, and two prehistoric potsherds (from a small posthole; a further potsherd, a waste-flake and a Mesolithic flint implement occurred as residual material in later contexts). Roman period features included postholes (including one which produced a small, silvered or tinned, copper-alloy belt buckle of AD first century military type), pits and ditches, the last particularly rich in finds. Two large ditches, although rich in Roman finds, also produced medieval potsherds.

As is normally the case at Fishbourne, the topsoil was found to have a depth of up to c.0.5m below surface. The last c.0.25-0.3m (i.e. below modern plough depth) is an old ploughsoil layer buried beneath layers of build up created by tipping the night soil from the streets of Medieval (and post-Medieval?) Chichester. During the course of the 1995 evaluation no attempt was made to recover finds from the buried ploughsoil, though its presence was noted; on other Fishbourne sites it has produced significant numbers of Medieval coins.

Method

Three trenches (see Fig. 1) were marked out on the proposed house footprints and were machine excavated to the surface of the buried ploughsoil. This was then scanned by metal detector before being in turn removed by machine to reveal archaeological features cut into the natural brickearth subsoil or deposits lying on it. All archaeological contexts were given unique numbers, were recorded in plan (at 1:20 scale), partially excavated and recorded in section (at 1:10 scale) and, in the case of discrete features, completely excavated.

Results (see Fig. 2)

The dominant features were a series of approximately north-south and east-west ditches, usually with accompanying fences. Additional features were a large number of postholes and several gullies and small pits. Identification of the date and function of these features awaits full analysis of the finds and archaeo-environmental/sedimentological samples; however interim 'spot-dates' have been provided by inspection of the coarse pottery and coins (see Appendix 1; note that these are the dates of the fills of the ditches, not those of their periods of use) and preliminary conclusions are discussed below.

Unfortunately, all aspects of the archaeological excavations were hindered by heavy rain and a consequently extremely high water table. All excavated features promptly filled with water and at various times the trenches themselves had to be pumped dry before digging could take place. Under such conditions it is unfortunate but inevitable that some features may have been misinterpreted or overlooked.

Discussion (1995 contexts are in brackets)

Prehistoric

Small and abraded prehistoric (Bronze Age?) pottery sherds from the fills of stakehole 47, posthole (18)/95 and gully 61 are probably residual, those from posthole (10)/129, gully 99 and spreads 86 and 192 certainly are.

Roman

For ease of description the features can be grouped as follows:

N-S and E-W ditches, gullies and fences

Ditches 9, 17, 179, 194, 203 and 252, gullies 41, 87/104 and 180, fences 71~79, 95~155, 114~120 and 198~260

NNW-SSE and WSW-ENE ditches, gullies and fences

Ditches (36), (38), 6/211, 24 and 189, gullies 61 and 66/182, fences 43~250, 69~298, 248~292 and 256~286.

Other alignments

Ditches 10, 29 and 133, gullies 82 and 177.

Other

Ring-gully 99, gullies 138 and 296, various pits and (apparently) non-fence postholes.

Many of the ditches have fences either in direct association or on the same line. These and unrelated ditches and fences are presumably land boundaries and/or drainage features. Whether they relate to military, industrial or agricultural activity or are garden features is, for now, unknown. Ditch 211, which (in trench 3) has three flanking fences, may be an aqueduct.

Most of the features produced mainly finds typical of the 1st and 2nd century Fishbourne Palace site to the east. These include relatively large quantities of imported fineware pottery and early types of tile. Also included, however, are small quantities of 3rd century pottery. Given the sheer quantities of tile and masonry and the apparent lack of significant masonry buildings in the immediate vicinity of the site, it seems likely that most features were deliberately infilled with a combination of unwanted building materials and old domestic debris. Possible interpretations are:

1. The features were infilled in the 3rd century with waste materials from the Palace site and from contemporary sources.
2. The features were infilled after the 3rd century, with waste materials from the Palace and other sites, using methods which included little or no contemporary waste or at a time when the material culture was relatively poor.

Medieval and later

The buried ploughsoil produced small quantities of Medieval and post-Medieval pottery and a 14th century coin.

Other

Compilation of a final report awaits the results of the monitoring phase. It is intended that the ultimate repository of the finds and archive will be Fishbourne Palace.

References

- Cunliffe, B., Down, A, and Rudkin, D. (1996) *Excavations at Fishbourne 1969-1988*, Chichester Excavations 9. Chichester District Council.
- Kenny, J. (1992) Fishbourne: Westward House. *The Archaeology of Chichester and District 1992*. Chichester District Council.
- Wildman, J. (1995) *Archaeological Evaluation, Glebe Meadow, Fishbourne* (a report produced for Miller Hughes Associates by Southern Archaeology).

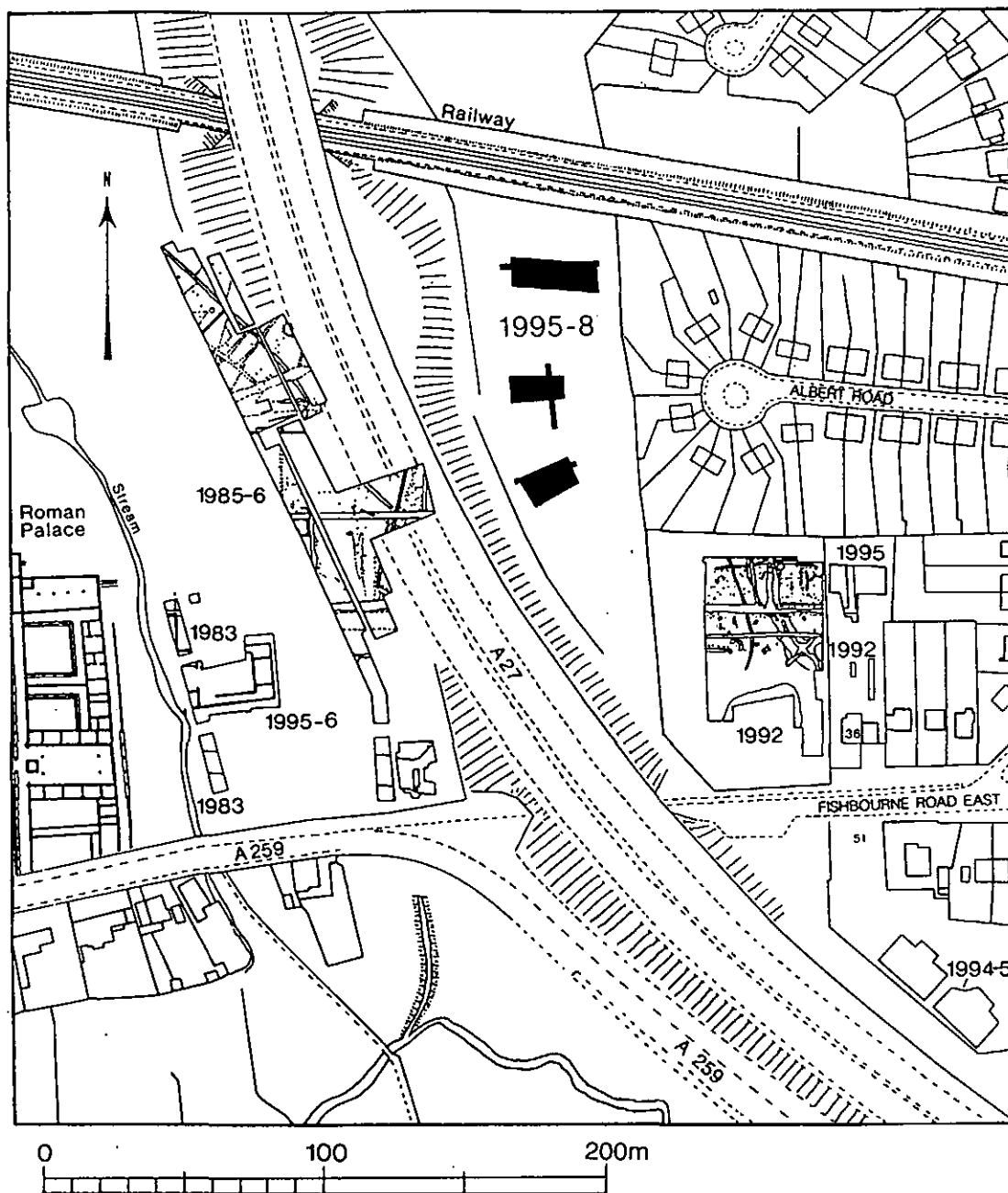
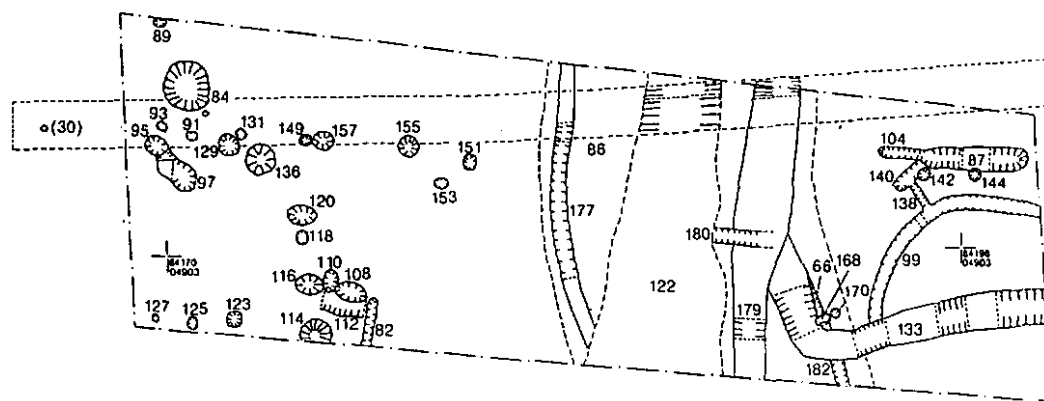
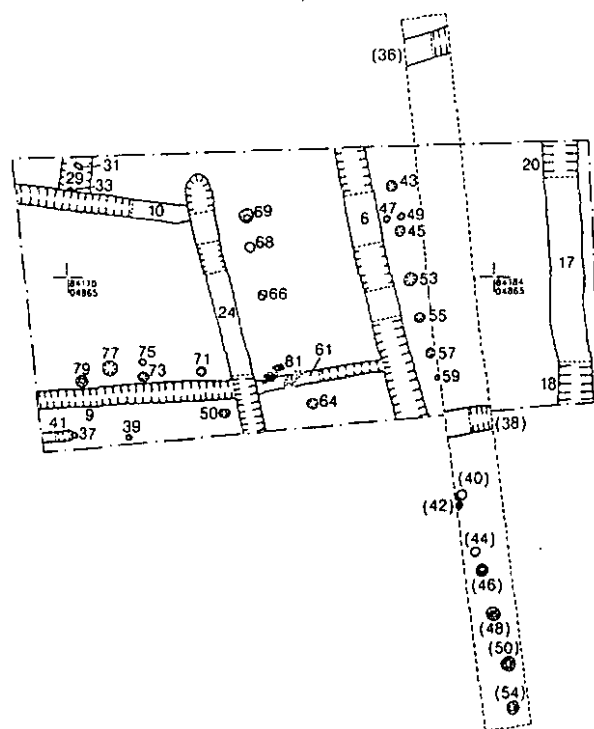


Fig. 1: location plan, scale 1:2500

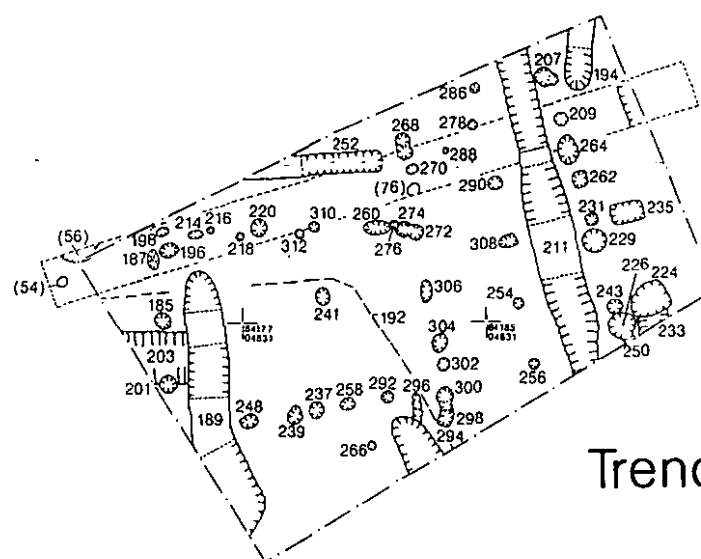


Trench 1



Trench 2

18420
10485



Trench 3



Fig. 2: trench plan, scale 1:250

Appendix 1: context list

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
1		trench	1	
2		trench	2	
3		trench	3	
Trench 1				
13		topsoil	1	
14		nightsoil layer	1	p-Med.
82	83	gully	1	
83		fill of gully 82	1	Roman
84	85	pit	1	
85		fill of pit 85	1	mid - late 1 st
86		layer	1	late 2 nd & 3 rd
87	88, 102	gully	1	
88	(same no)	section of gully 87	1	late 2 nd & 3 rd
89	90	posthole	1	
90		fill of posthole 89	1	
91	92	posthole	1	
92		fill of posthole 91	1	Roman
93	94	posthole	1	
94		fill of posthole 93	1	
95	96	pit	1	
96		fill of pit 95	1	1 st - 2 nd
97	98	gully	1	
98		fill of gully 97	1	Roman
99	100, 103	ring-gully	1	
100		fill of gully 99	1	late 2 nd & 3 rd
101	102	section of gully 87	1	
102		fill of section 101	1	1 st - 2 nd
103		fill of gully 99	1	late 2 nd & 3 rd
104	105	gully	1	
105		fill of gully 104	1	Roman
108	109	posthole	1	
109		fill of posthole 108	1	Roman
110	111	pit	1	
111		fill of pit 110	1	
112	113	?gully	1	
113		fill of ?gully 112	1	
114	115	pit	1	
115		fill of pit 114	1	Roman
116	117	posthole	1	
117		fill of posthole 116	1	Roman
118	119	posthole	1	
119		fill of posthole 118	1	Roman
120	121	posthole	1	
121		fill of posthole 120	1	1 st - 2 nd
122		modern feature	1	
123	124	posthole	1	
124		fill of posthole 123	1	
125	126	posthole	1	
126		fill of posthole 125	1	
127	128	posthole	1	
128		fill of posthole 127	1	Roman
129	130	posthole	1	
130		fill of posthole 129	1	1 st - 2 nd

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
131	132	posthole	1	
132		fill of posthole 130	1	late 1 st
133	134, 135, 147, 160, 163, 165	ditch	1	
134		fill of section 184	1	Roman
135		fill of section 184	1	Roman
136	137	pit	1	
137		fill of pit 136	1	1 st - 2 nd
138	139	gully	1	
139		fill of gully 138	1	Roman
140	141	gully	1	
141		fill of gully 140	1	Roman
142	143	posthole	1	
143		fill of posthole 142	1	
144	145	posthole	1	
145		fill of posthole 144	1	Roman
146	147	section of ditch 133	1	
147		fill of section 146	1	late 1 st - early 2 nd
148		cleaning layer	1	Roman
149	150	posthole	1	
150		fill of posthole 149	1	
151	152	posthole	1	
152		fill of posthole 151	1	
153	154	posthole	1	
154		fill of posthole 153	1	Roman
155	156	posthole	1	
156		fill of posthole 155	1	Roman
157	158	posthole	1	
158		fill of posthole 157	1	Roman
159	160, 163	section of ditch 133	1	
160		fill of section 159	1	Roman
163		fill of section 159	1	Roman
164	165	section of ditch 133	1	
165		fill of section 164	1	3 rd
166	167	gully	1	
167		fill of gully 166	1	late 2 nd & 3 rd
168	169	posthole	1	
169		fill of posthole 168	1	Roman
170	171	posthole	1	
171		fill of posthole 170	1	
172	173	gully	1	
173		fill of gully 172	1	Roman
174	175	gully	1	
175		fill of gully 174	1	Roman
176		fill of gully 179	1	Roman
177		fill of gully 178	1	1 st - 2 nd
178	177	gully	1	late 1 st
179	176	gully	1	
180	181	gully	1	
181		fill of gully 180	1	
182	183	gully	1	
183		fill of gully 182	1	
184	134, 135	section of ditch 133	1	

Trench 2

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
4	5	section of ditch 24	2	
5		fill of 4	2	late 1 st
6	8, 16, 107	ditch	2	
7	8	section of ditch 6	2	
8		fill of section 7	2	late 2 nd & 3 rd
9	23	ditch	2	
10	28	ditch	2	
15	16	section of ditch 6	2	
16		fill of section 15	2	Roman
17	19, 21	ditch	2	
18	19	section of ditch 17	2	
19		fill of section 18	2	1 st - 2 nd
20	21	section of ditch 17	2	
21		fill of section 20	2	Roman
22	23	section of ditch 9	2	
23		fill of section 22	2	Roman
24	5, 36, 162	ditch	2	
25		topsoil	2	
26		nightsoil layer	2	Medieval
27	28	section of ditch 10	2	
28		fill of section 27	2	late 2 nd & 3 rd
29	30	ditch	2	
30		fill of ditch 29	2	
31	32	posthole	2	
32		fill of posthole 31	2	
33	34	posthole	2	
34		fill of posthole 33	2	
35	36	section of ditch 24	2	
36		fill of section 35	2	late 1 st - early 2 nd
37	38	posthole	2	
38		fill of posthole 37	2	
39	40	posthole	2	
40		fill of posthole 39	2	Roman
41	42	gully	2	
42		fill of gully 41	2	Roman
43	44	posthole	2	
44		fill of posthole 43	2	
45	46	posthole	2	
46		fill of posthole 43	2	
47	48	stakehole	2	
48		fill of stakehole 47	2	prehistoric (BA?)
49	52	stakehole	2	
50	51	posthole	2	
51		fill of posthole 50	2	
52		fill of stakehole 49	2	
53	54	posthole	2	
54		fill of posthole 53	2	
55	56	posthole	2	
56		fill of posthole 55	2	
57	58	posthole	2	
58		fill of posthole 57	2	
59	60	posthole?	2	
60		fill of posthole 59	2	
61	63	gully	2	
62		section of gully 61	2	prehistoric (BA?)

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
63		fill of section 62	2	
64	65	posthole	2	
65		fill of posthole 64	2	
66	67	posthole	2	
67		fill of posthole 66	2	
68		posthole (unexc.)	2	
69	70	posthole	2	
70		fill of posthole 69	2	Roman
71	72	posthole	2	
72		fill of posthole 71	2	
73	74	posthole	2	
74		fill of posthole 73	2	
75	76	posthole	2	
76		fill of posthole 75	2	
77	78	posthole	2	
78		fill of posthole 77	2	Roman
79	80	posthole	2	
80		fill of posthole 79	2	
81		layer	2	
106	107	section of ditch 6	2	
107		fill of section 106	2	Roman
161	162	section of ditch 24	2	
162		fill of section 161	2	Roman
316		posthole alignment	2	

Trench 3

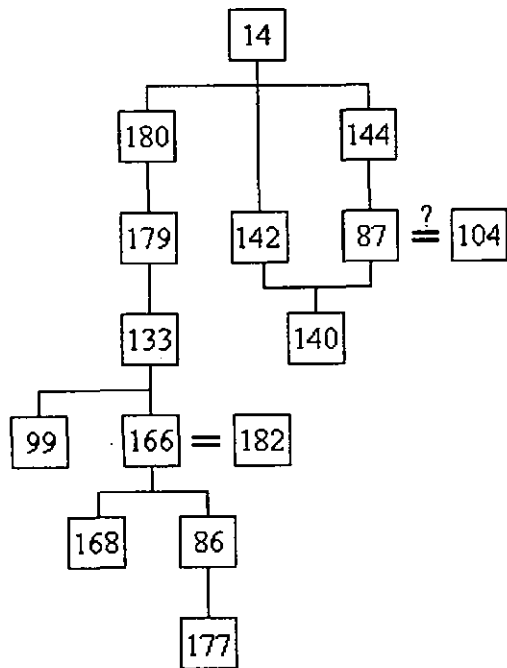
11		topsoil	3	
12		nightsoil layer	3	
185	186	posthole	3	
186		fill of posthole 185	3	late 1 st
187	188	posthole	3	
188		fill of posthole 187	3	
189	191, 193, 200, 206, 223, 247	ditch	3	
190	191, 193, 200	section of ditch 189	3	
191		fill of section 190	3	1 st ½ 4 th
192		layer	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
193		fill of section 190	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
194	195	?ditch	3	
195		fill of ?ditch 194	3	1 st - 2 nd
196	197	posthole	3	
197		fill of posthole 196	3	Roman
198	199	posthole	3	
199		fill of posthole 198	3	
200		fill of section 190	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
201	202	posthole	3	
202		fill of posthole 201	3	
203	204	ditch	3	
204		fill of ditch 203	3	Roman
205	206	section of ditch 189	3	
206		fill of section 205	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
207	208	posthole	3	
208		fill of posthole 207	3	
209	210	posthole	3	

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
210		fill of posthole 209	3	
211	213, 281, 283	ditch	3	
212	213	section of ditch 211	3	
213		fill of section 212	3	1 st - 3 rd
214	215	posthole	3	
215		fill of posthole 214	3	Roman
216	217	posthole	3	
217		fill of posthole 216	3	
218	219	posthole	3	
219		fill of posthole 218	3	
220	221	posthole	3	
221		fill of posthole 220	3	Roman
222	223	section of ditch 189	3	
223		fill of section 222	3	late 1 st
224	225	pit	3	
225		fill of pit 224	3	Roman
226	227	posthole	3	
227		fill of posthole 226	3	Roman
228		posthole alignment	3	
229	230	posthole	3	
230		fill of posthole 229	3	Roman
231	232	posthole	3	
232		fill of posthole 231	3	
233	234	?pit	3	
234		fill of ?pit 233	3	
235	236	posthole	3	
236		fill of posthole 235	3	mid - late 1 st
237	238	posthole	3	
238		fill of posthole 237	3	Roman
239	240	posthole	3	
240		fill of posthole 239	3	late 1 st - 2 nd
241	242	posthole	3	
242		fill of posthole 241	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
243	244	posthole	3	
244		fill of posthole 243	3	
245	246	posthole	3	
246		fill of posthole 245	3	
247		fill of section 222	3	mid 1 st - early 2 nd
248	249	posthole	3	
249		fill of posthole 248	3	Roman
250	251	posthole	3	
251		fill of posthole 250	3	
252	253	ditch	3	
253		fill of ditch 252	3	Roman
254	255	posthole	3	
255		fill of posthole 254	3	
256	257	posthole	3	
257		fill of posthole 256	3	
258	259	posthole	3	
259		fill of posthole 258	3	Roman
260	261	posthole	3	
261		fill of posthole 260	3	
262	263	posthole	3	
263		fill of posthole 262	3	Roman
264	265	posthole	3	
265		fill of posthole 264	3	

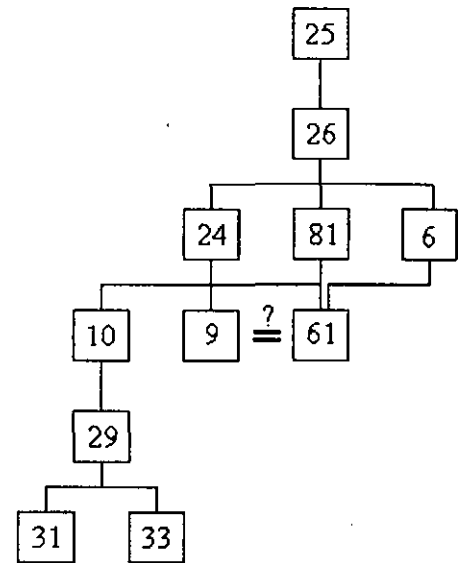
Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot-date
266	267	stakehole	3	
267		fill of stakehole 266	3	Roman
268	269	posthole	3	
269		fill of posthole 268	3	
270	271	posthole	3	
271		fill of posthole 270	3	
272	273	posthole	3	
273		fill of posthole 272	3	Roman
274	275	posthole	3	
275		fill of posthole 274	3	
276	277	posthole	3	
277		fill of posthole 276	3	
278	279	posthole	3	
279		fill of posthole 278	3	1 st - 2 nd
280	281	section of ditch 211	3	
281		fill of section 280	3	late 2 nd & 3 rd
282	283	section of ditch 211	3	
283		fill of section 282	3	mid 1 st - 2 nd
284		posthole alignment	3	
285		posthole alignment	3	
286	287	posthole	3	
287		fill of posthole 286	3	
288	289	posthole	3	
289		fill of posthole 288	3	
290	291	posthole	3	
291		fill of posthole 290	3	
292	293	posthole	3	
293		fill of posthole 292	3	
294	295	?ditch	3	
295		fill of ?ditch 294	3	Roman
296	297	gully	3	
297		fill of gully 296	3	
298	299	posthole	3	
299		fill of posthole 298	3	
300	301	posthole	3	
301		fill of posthole 300	3	
302	303	posthole	3	
303		fill of posthole 302	3	
304	305	posthole	3	
305		fill of posthole 304	3	
306	307	posthole	3	
307		fill of posthole 306	3	
308	309	posthole	3	
309		fill of posthole 308	3	Roman
310	311	posthole	3	Roman
311		fill of posthole 310	3	
312	313	posthole	3	
313		fill of posthole 312	3	
314		posthole alignment	3	
315		posthole alignment	3	

Appendix 2: matrices

Trench 1



Trench 2



Trench 3

