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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT 8-12 THE BUTTS, WORCESTER WCM 101173

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Archaeological evaluation at 8-12 The Butts, Worcester WCM 101173 September-October, 2003

Mike Napthan, 3rd December, 2003
With specialist reports by C J Evans and E A Pearson

1 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in September-October 2003 by Mike Napthan Archaeology prior to groundworks for a residential development at 8-12 The Butts, Worcester (NGR SO8478 5512). The site has recently been cleared of a number of late 18th/early 19th Century buildings including workshops (formerly stables and a smithy and at least two houses, one latterly an upholsterers' workshop) Only limited informal records were made of the buildings prior to demolition.

Two trenches were excavated and a section of cellar wall removed to reveal the overall depth of deposits. The trenches were placed so as to intercept the projected line of a Roman road, previously seen to the south, in the event there was no evidence of the road at this location. The northern-most trench exposed (at its eastern end) a complex and apparently undisturbed sequence of Roman and immediately post Roman deposits including gravelled surfaces, pits and a stake-built structure. The earliest occupation appeared to be of late 1st-early 2nd Century date and consisted of a large pit sealed by gravel surfaces of similar date. Some of the pottery from this pit was of forms usually associated with early Roman military sites, of which there has been little previous evidence in Worcester. Subsequent surfaces appeared to be of 2nd-3rd Century date, but continued occupation of the area into the 3rd-4th C was attested by material residual in post-medieval contexts. Later Roman or post-Roman "dark earth" deposits survived to within a few inches of the floor levels of the recently demolished buildings. The central area of the northern trench contained a very large, and apparently linear post-medieval feature, probably a Civil War defensive ditch although post medieval artefacts were very sparse within the fills. The alignment of this feature was unclear, but probably south-west to north-east. To the west of this feature a small area of gravelled surface of Roman date survived, but had been cut away to the west by a complex of deeply cut post-medieval features, possibly sandpits – these were not investigated in detail.

The Roman and immediately post-Roman deposits appeared to be well preserved in the north-eastern half of the site, albeit locally truncated by post medieval features. In contrast the south-western side of the property had been affected by extensive pit-digging and possible terracing down of the Butts frontage to below the top of natural deposits. The cellared areas appear to retain no surviving significant deposits.

2 Introduction

2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology prior to redevelopment of a site at 8-12 The Butts, Worcester. The programme of works was based upon a brief supplied by the City Archaeological Officer (Planning application P00L0109;

L00L0014). The evaluation is being undertaken on behalf of the landowner Andrew Grant (the Client) and has been arranged through his architects Dean-Walker Bateman (The Agents).

2.2 This report represents a summary of the findings of the evaluation. The project was designed to meet a brief prepared by Worcester City Councils Archaeology Officer. The project design was prepared in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines) issued by English Heritage.

2.3 The present investigation of the site is registered on the Worcester City Sites and Monuments record as WCM101173. The site lies in the Historic core of Worcester City (Archaeologically Sensitive Area No 18) and the Historic City Conservation Area (Fig 1). The City Wall 25m to the south (WCM 96118) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Here and Worc 285G). Roman material and features (possibly associated with a roadside settlement) has been recovered from previous archaeological evaluations and excavations in the area, including Tramps Night Club (Napthan 2002), Broad Street (WCM 100349; Barker 1968) and Blackfriars (WCM 100218, WCM 100799; Mundy 1985-6 archive report). Further Roman deposits, including a possible section of Roman road, were identified to the north-east at Farrier Street (WCM 100180, WCM100181; Dalwood Buteux and Darlington, 1992). Work has been recently undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on the site immediately to the west, and has revealed widespread evidence of Roman activity.

2.4 The site lies just to the north of the circuit of medieval city defences, near a length of the City Wall and City ditch. The site lies adjacent to the former Precinct of the Blackfriars Dominican Friary founded in 1347 (WCM 96027).

3 Aims

3.1 The purpose of an archaeological field evaluation is to gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site. These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following objectives:
i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.
iv) to address the following research objectives;

- the alignment of the Roman Road
- the location and character of Roman roadside remains, including remains of ironworking
- the dating of Roman activity
- the nature of any medieval activity
- the location of Civil War defensive works and siegeworks

4 Archaeological background

4.1 The area to the south-west of the present site (between Rack Alley and Broad Street) was extensively trenched and excavated prior to redevelopment to create Blackfriars shopping arcade in the 1960s (Barker 1968) and its replacement Crowngate mall in the 1980s (WCM100799: Mundy 1986). These archaeological investigations revealed a sequence of Roman activities including iron working and a north-south road (Fig 5), followed by cultivation deposits and subsequent construction of the Blackfriars Friary. The 1960s excavations exposed possible hearth or furnace bottoms and two wells of Roman date.

4.2 An observation of a sewer trench in Angel Street/Angel Place indicated the presence of a layer of sandstone rubble at approximately 1.2m below current street level, it was partially sealed by a layer of iron slag, but no other dating evidence was observed (WCM100252; Mundy 1991 HER record). Further to the west, at 14/20 The Butts a number of Roman pits and ditches were identified, and a ditch of 4th Century date produced building debris (WCM 100761; Coates and White, 2000). Immediately to the south west of the present site a watching brief at 3-5 The Butts revealed no deposits of pre Civil War date, but this is probably because the exposed area fell almost entirely within the line of the City Ditch (WCM 100194; Bretherton and Pearson 1998). A salvage record of Roman deposits, including a possible hearth and clay floor, was made during construction of link steps within Tramps Night Club – these were associated with ceramic and stone roofing debris and pottery of 2nd Century date, sealed by 1m of "dark earth" cultivated soils (WCM 100899; Napthan 2002). Recent work at 1 The Butts, opposite the present site exposed a fine ashlar built Roman well of late 3rd-4th C date, incorporating re-used earlier masonry – the fill of the upper part of the well consisted almost entirely of demolition debris from a high status Roman building including abundant painted wall plaster, *tesserae* and box-flue tiles. The date of the final infilling appears to have been in the late 370s or 380s on the basis of the coin evidence. The well produced an exceptional group of late Roman pottery (WCM 101108; Napthan (Interim) 2003 and forthcoming). The precise location of the buildings associated with this well remains to be identified.

4.3 Trial trenching and excavation at Farrier Street immediately to the north-east of the present site (WCM 100180, WCM100181; Dalwood, Buteux and Darlington, 1992) appeared to confirm the alignment of the Roman Road previously identified by Barker and Mundy, and identified a complex of small pits, postholes and gullies of uncertain, apparently industrial function associated with probable iron working. Very little Roman building material was recovered .

4.4 The medieval activity in this area appears to have been primarily agricultural, but there is some evidence that sand and gravel extraction occurred as the area was described as the "gravel butts" in the early post medieval period. The "butts" place-name is generally associated with medieval archery practice ranges, and found on the perimeters of several medieval towns and cities. The City ditch (WCM 96139) has previously been observed at several locations along the Butts including 1 The Butts (WCM 101108) immediately opposite the present site, where there are indications of a berm up to 4m wide between the ditch and City Wall (Napthan (Interim) 2003 and forthcoming) . The observed ditch fills have all proved to be post medieval, representing accumulation and deliberate dumping in the post Civil War period followed by 19th C levelling up as the area was developed. The Ditch was an integral part of the Civil War defences elsewhere in the City, but the contemporary siege plans (Vaughan) shows an earthwork defence lying across the line of the ditch in the vicinity of the present site. This feature is not shown on Valentine Greens map (1795) which depicts the majority of Civil War defences in some detail.

4.5 The road line of the Lower Butts appears to have had post-medieval origins, and the area to the north remained largely as tenter grounds on which cloth was dried after dyeing in the 17th and 18th C. The present property fell with the Netherton Estate (Figs 2-4), centred on a large post-medieval house to the west. Post medieval activity on the site included stables and a shoeing smithy established by the early 19th C. at which time much of the Netherton Estate, consisting of small yards surrounded by workshops and some living accommodation, was leased out for similar equestrian related functions. The specialist nature of business in this particular area doubtless reflected its position immediately between the main posting inns and the extensive grazing area of Pitchcroft.

4.6 More recent activity on the site included a mid 20th C upholsterers workshop, and an antique dealers workshop. There was also some evidence of motor-trade activity on the site.

4.7 The present report follows and supercedes an Interim Report of 20th Nov. 2003 relating to the same evaluation (Napthan, 2003a).

5 Methodology

5.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated using a 180° mechanical excavator in locations designed to expose the line of the postulated Roman road from Blackfriars to Cherrytree Walk (Fig 6). A section of wall and an area of floor were removed from the former cellar adjoining the Paul Pry PH to determine the likely vertical extent of deposits. All subsequent excavation and cleaning was undertaken by hand and deposits recorded (Figs 7, 8 and 9)

5.2 The position of the trenches was surveyed in relation to the surrounding buildings and features marked on the Ordnance Survey. The site was levelled based on a datum of 22.16mAOD transferred from the benchmark on the former Congregational Sunday Schools building on the corner of Angel Place and the Butts. Current ground level on the site, which slopes up to the north-east is generally between 20.33mAOD and 21.22mAOD. Two substantial areas on the street frontage have been truncated by late 18^{th}-19^{th} C cellars to approximately 18.33mAOD. The highest observed natural deposits were at 20.20mAOD

5.3 All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the Excavation Manual (Technical Manual 3). Plans and sections were drawn of the trenches at 1:50/ 1:20

5.4 *Pottery analysis* All hand retrieved pottery was examined , Roman pottery was identified, quantified and dated to period by Jane Evans. The pottery was recorded with reference to the Worcestershire County Fabric Series, prefixed WCM in the text (Hurst and Rees 1992, 200-209) and, where possible, the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). The assemblage is quantified by sherd count, weight and rim EVE (estimated vessel equivalent); base EVEs are recorded in the archive. Precise form types and broad vessel classes (for example bowl, cook pot) were recorded, together with any evidence for decoration, manufacture, repair, use or reuse. The comparatively small assemblage of medieval and post medieval pottery was spot-dated but not studied in detail. Nineteen contexts produced Roman pottery. The largest groups came from the large pit ([122]: 38.5% by wt, 59% by rim EVE), the ditch ([104]: 19% by wt, 11% by rim EVE) and the "dark earth" layer (contexts 110, 111, 112: 29% by wt, 22% by rim EVE). Only these are discussed in detail.

5.5 *Environmental Processing and analysis* The sample was processed by flotation followed by wet sieving using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300μm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recover of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds. The residue was fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flot was fully sorted using a low power EMT stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and seed identification manual (Beijerinck 1947). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the Flora of the British Isles, 3^{rd} edition (Clapham, Tutin and Moore 1989). Animal bone was identified with the aid of modern bone reference collections housed at the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and identification guides (Schmid 1972 and Hillson 1992).

6 Results

6.1.1 *Natural deposits*

The natural deposits consisted of firm yellow and reddish brown sand, with clear gravel lenses following the bedding planes, (as observed in the exposed section behind the cellar wall). The natural deposits were within 0.3m of current ground levels at their highest point which was in the area immediately adjacent to the eastern cellar (20.22mAOD). This compares closely to the highest observed natural at 1 The Butts (20.49mAOD) and suggests strongly that previous reports of a natural valley in this area were mistaken. The natural sand deposits exposed in Trench 2 were very compact and resembled a very gritty friable red sandstone, in Trench 1 natural consisted of light brown sand with fine gravel lenses.

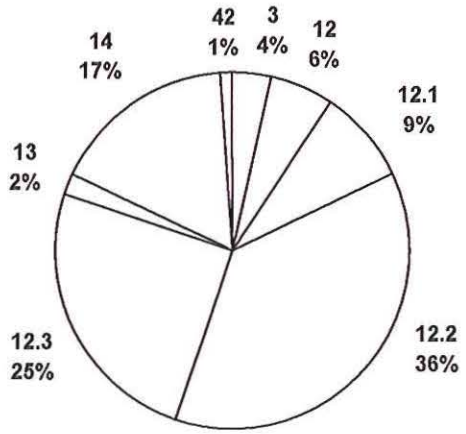
6.2.1 *Early Roman deposits*

A large pit [122]; Fig 4 was partially exposed in section and plan within Trench 1. No original edges were observed (it having been partly truncated by later features), but the tip lines within the feature suggested a circular or oval feature approximately 3m in diameter and over 1.5m deep from Roman ground level. The earliest excavated deposit was (123), a charcoal rich grey sandy fill of [122], abundant animal bone, frequent Roman pottery of mid 1st to early 2nd C date, moderate burnt clay and occasional burnt cobbles. A small quantity of ceramic building material was recovered from [122] including two fragments of *pilae* or *lydion* from context (123) This fill was subjected to environmental sampling and proved to contain parts of an unbutchered horse skeleton together with other animal and charred plant remains (see 6.2.3 below and Appendix 2). Overlying (123) was a tip of compact brown sand (125) with very few inclusions. A fairly complete small horned cattle skull (Fig 12) was recovered from (121), but this context otherwise contained only sparse artefacts. The pottery dating for pit [122], together with a worn and heavily corroded probable Claudian copy coin indicates a late 1st to early 2nd Century date.

6.2.2 **The Pottery from pit [122] (C Jane Evans)**

The pit [122] produced a characteristically late first to early second century, or "Flavian-Trajanic," assemblage. The absence of all but a single sherd of Black burnished ware (BB1) suggested a TAQ of c AD 120. Vessels included a variety of reduced ware jars with linear rustication. Most of these had lid-seat rims, similar to examples noted elsewhere in Worcester (e.g. Darlington and Evans 1992, fig. 22.1). Rusticated jars occurred in reduced organic Severn Valley ware (WCM Fabric 12.3), and in fine sandy ware (WCM Fabric 14). The latter included a hard-fired fabric, similar to one noted at Alcester (Lee et al. 1994, 13, fabric BC). A distinctive jar form, with an indented shoulder, was also paralleled at Alcester (Lee et al. 1994, fig. 7 R135). Other forms included a dish or small platter, an upright walled Severn Valley tankard (cf Webster 1976, fig. 7, E38), a Severn Valley ware jar (cf. Webster 1976, fig. 4 C21/C22) and the flange rim from a bowl. The latter is probably from a form similar to vessels noted at Wroxeter in military and early second century assemblages (Timby et al. 2000, fig. 4.67, B14.28/29). A more unusual form was a small jar or beaker with an upright rim, a form paralleled at Alcester (cf Lee et al. fig. 28 O.194) and in the military assemblage at Wroxeter (Timby et al. fig. 4.52 BK6). This example was in a fine sandy fabric (Fabric 13) similar to Alcester fabric DW (Lee et al. 1994, 6) and was decorated with a white slip herringbone pattern. The assemblage also included the rim of a collared, Hofheim type flagon,

Table 1: Pit [122] Fabrics by % Wt.



similar to types noted in military contexts at Gloucester (Ireland 1983, fig. 67 103) and Wroxeter (Timby et al. 2000, fig. 4.49 F1.1). The most common fabrics by far were the characteristically early, organic Severn Valley ware variants (Table. 1; WCM 12.2, 12.3) more common here than in the early second century assemblage from Sidbury (Darlington and

Evans 1992, fig. 5). There was also a notably high proportion of reduced wares (Table. 1 WCM 12.1, 12.3, 14), totalling 51% by weight (cf 6% in the overall assemblage from Sidbury). Only one sherd of samian came from this feature, not studied by a specialist for the purposes of this report. The group as a whole contained a number of joining sherds.

6.2.3 **Environmental evidence from pit [122] (Liz Pearson)**

6.2.3.1 A total of 3.4 kg (over 95 fragments) of large mammal bone were recovered from the 20 litre sample from context (123) – Appendix 2. These were predominantly well-preserved, mostly entire horse bones which are likely to have come from one individual as pairs of bones were recorded. No butchery marks or pathology were noted on these bones, and no definite signs of unfused epiphyses. It is therefore likely that this is a disarticulated skeleton of a mature animal which has not been butchered. The bones are likely to have been rapidly buried and not exposed on the surface for long or redeposited from elsewhere on the site as they are well preserved, little fragmented and show no signs of gnawing by dogs or rodents. A small number of remaining bones fragments included sheep/goat and pig molars and sheep or goat long bones and horn core.

6.2.3.2 The soil sample was charcoal rich and contained a small assemblage of charred plant remains. These were dominated by small weed seeds (see Appendix 2) which may have been growing with a cereal crop as occasional cereal grains (barley; *Hordeum vulgare* and unidentified cereal) were recovered. Cereal crop waste may have been used as tinder or fuel for fires and disposed of in this pit, but equally the seeds may simply have been present in other waste burnt. The deposit sampled appears to contain waste (Appendix 2) from a hearth in which crop waste may have been used as tinder or fuel. The burnt waste and the animal bone seem to be unrelated as there were no signs of burning on the bones. It is uncertain whether the remainder of the horse skeleton survived in the immediate vicinity as the remainder of the feature was not excavated.

6.2.4 Pit [122] was sealed by at least two distinct layers of gravelling - (117) of 1st – 2nd C date and (116), which was undated. Both were overlaid by (114) which consisted of a concreted mass of iron slag and greenish sand containing occasional mid 2nd C pottery. This context was not exposed in plan but did not appear to be a finished or level surface. To the west a further area of fine gravelling (118) was at a similar level to (117), suggesting that they formed parts of an extensive gravelled area. The contrasting density and size of gravel might represent differential use.

6.2.5 **The Pottery (C Jane Evans)**

The pottery sealing gravel surfaces (117) and (118) dated to the late first or early second century. Context (117) produced sherds of Severn Valley ware, predominantly organic tempered. Context (118) produced a characteristically early Severn valley ware bowl type (cf Webster 1976, fig. 9 H59) and five sherds of samian. The latter are possibly from Les Martres-de-Veyre, which exported samian between c AD 100 and 120 (Webster 1996, 3).

6.3.1 *Later Roman/ post Roman deposits*

Layer (112) consisted of a dark grey sandy loam typical "dark earth" clearly cut by stake-holes and with lenses of compacted brown sand on its surface. The dating evidence for this material was all 3rd Century Roman, but there was also a high level of residual earlier material, and it is possible that all the Roman material was residual in a post-Roman soil accumulation. Insufficient area was excavated to determine any patterning in the stake-holes apparently cut into (112) – they might represent any form of stake-built structure.

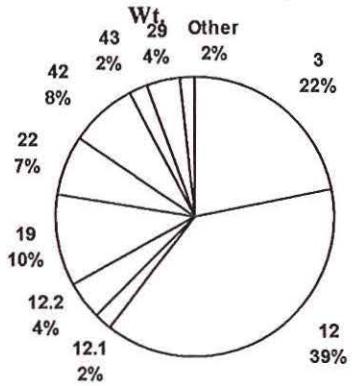
6.3.2 Layers (110) and (111) were similar "dark earth" layers and represent arbitrary spits of a single deposit of apparently cultivated soils. Small quantities of post-medieval material were recovered, but these appeared to be intrusive from adjacent cut features. The compact nature of these soils was evidence of trampling, and the presence of small fragments of slag might represent residual surface metalling. A radiate copy coin of late 3rd C type was recovered from context (110).

Radiate copy coin of late 3rd C type from context (110) Diameter 16mm

6.3.3 **Roman Pottery (C Jane Evans)**

Three contexts represented spits excavated through a layer of dark earth (Contexts 110, 111, 112). The level of fragmentation in this group can be assessed from its average sherd weight. At 12g, this is lower than the 22g average for sherds from the 'dark earths' recorded at Castle Street (Dalwood et al. 1997, 7, Appendix 4, context 204), thought to derive from an extensive midden. It is, however, not particularly low compared to the pottery from the Roman pit [122] discussed above. This could perhaps represent a *plaggen* soil, 'a cultivated soil on the edge of a settlement enriched by the addition of manure and rubbish' (Limbrey 1975, 335; Darlington and Evans 1992, 33). The assemblage contained characteristically late third to fourth century fabrics (WCM 29) and forms (cf Webster 1976, fig. 7 C32/33, E44) together with residual early fabrics (WCM 12.2, 43). The absence of the diagnostically late fourth century + shelly wares is interesting, given their presence on the nearby site at 1 The Butts (Evans 2003). Also of interest is the presence of crudely formed sherds in handmade Malvernian ware (WCM 3). One rim was very similar to an example from Sidbury (Darlington and Evans 1992, fig. 35 4c). The function of these vessels is uncertain, suggestions have included portable bread ovens and bee-hives (op. cit.), but they could have an industrial function. They are, however, characteristic of third and fourth century deposits. A chunky, rather angular, rim had no apparent curvature and could be related (cf Darlington and Evans 1992, fig. 35 4a), although the form is similar to large storage jars found on a late Roman kiln site in Malvern (Peacock 1967, fig. 4 81).

Table 2: Dark Earth: Fabrics by %



6.4.1 *Undated ?Roman deposits*

A layer of sandy brown soil containing occasional charcoal and burnt clay flecks was seen in section and plan in a small hand dug test slot cut through the cellar wall south-east of Trench 1 (Fig 6). The nature of the material and level corresponded with Roman deposits to the north, and it may be reasonably assumed that this layer was also Roman.

6.4.2 Significant quantities of residual Roman pottery were present on the site, and this covered a date range including the 4th C. There was however a noticeable paucity of Roman building material, no diagnostic material being recovered from later contexts.

6.5 *Medieval deposits*

The nature of medieval activity in the area was unclear, and no certainly medieval deposits were identified. There was however a small but significant quantity of residual medieval material including a small number of glazed and unglazed roof tile wasters and fragments of glazed roof and decorated floor tile. The floor tile was clearly part of a multi-tile pattern, but too damaged and worn to be precisely identified. Given the proximity of Blackfriars it is probable that the medieval material largely derived from activity associated with the monastery . The range of material covered the 13th-14th C to 16th C, and almost all were small and abraded sherds.

6.6 *Post-medieval deposits*

The principal post-medieval feature excavated was cut [104] which appeared to be a large ditch aligned approximately south-west to north-east, possibly curving to the north beyond the trench. Due to the size and position of this feature it was not possible to determine its extent or alignment with any precision, however it appeared to be approximately 4m across and 2 to 2.5m deep. It would seem probable that the feature originated as a Civil War defensive earthwork, and its upcast bank doubtless helped preserve the Roman deposits immediately to the east .The earliest excavated fill was (107) which contained rare fragments of medieval tile, including tile wasters and very rare post medieval pottery (?17th C.). The subsequent fills were largely devoid of artefacts and there was some evidence of a turf line at the eastern end of the feature, suggesting that [104] was partially filled then abandoned. Subsequent fills appear to have been primarily topsoil, perhaps derived from levelled earthworks. At the western end of Trench 1 there were a number of large intercutting pit features that were not examined in detail. Those which were sampled and augered proved to contain homogenous grey/dark grey silty loams containing frequent medieval roof tile fragments and occasional post medieval pottery. Pit [124] additionally contained abundant small fragments of iron slag. Augering of the intercutting pts in this area indicated that they were up to 2.3m deep (Fig 8). Trench 2 contained similar intercutting post medieval features, but these appeared to be shallow and of later date – relating to 19th C construction and 20th C demolition of buildings (formerly No. 10) on The Butts street frontage. There were several indications that ground levels had been reduced along the street frontage and this may account for the apparent shallowness of deposits on the southern part of the site.

6.6.1 **The Roman Pottery (by C Jane Evans)**

The Roman pottery from the fills of cut [104] was more mixed, as would be expected from an assemblage that had been redeposited in a later feature. It contained some diagnostically early fabrics (WCM 12.2, 12.3, 3) and forms (cf Webster 1976, fig. 4, C20); two sherds of samian, possibly South Gaulish; Black burnished ware; a Mancetter Hartshill mortarium dating to AD 160+, and diagnostically later Roman fabrics (WCM 38) and forms (cf Webster 1976, fig. 7, E44).

6.7.1 *Post-medieval buildings*

The recently demolished buildings (Figs 10 and 11) were not recorded formally prior to demolition, but appeared to be of several phases. No 8 (adjacent to the Paul Pry) was demolished several years ago, however the cellars remain. The rear cellar was vaulted in brick, and a blocked doorway in the eastern wall indicates that it formerly served as cellarage to the Paul Pry PH. The front cellar was of slightly different construction, and was evidently earlier. This cellar was served by stairs on the eastern side and was not vaulted, apparently the domestic cellar of No.8.

6.7.2 To the rear of No 8 were two small brick two storey structures of late 18th or early 19th C date. That facing Infirmary Walk was an irregularly shaped cottage, and possibly incorporated the rear structure. The rear structure had a small early 19th C cast-iron range and appears to have faced onto the yard in the middle of the 8-12 Butts plot, and possibly served as staff quarters for the stables/smithy. The room fronting Infirmary walk had a diagonally placed small corner

fireplace, and opened directly off the street. Observation of this building several years ago suggested to the author that there was a narrow stair to the first floor leading up to a single first floor room. There was insufficient evidence remaining to determine if there was originally a doorway between the two structures. At the time of demolition these were probably the only surviving unaltered examples of the poorer sort of 18th- early 19th C workers housing remaining in the City. Along the remainder of the Infirmary Walk frontage were a series of single storey brick sheds/workshops, these possibly originally open fronted. At the north-western corner of the site there was (until the recent demolition) an upstanding fragment of a brick two storey building (Figs 10, 11). This fragment was rendered and it was not possible to determine its date. It is possible that this was a relic of another small cottage as there is a blocked doorway to Infirmary Walk at this point. There was a lean-to corrugated iron clad building against the western side of the wall fragment, and this seems to have bridged an original entrance from Infirmary Walk.

6.7.4 The building at No 12 The Butts (Fig 10) was in relatively complete condition at the time of demolition, and appeared to be an early-mid 19th C brick and slate roofed two storey house with brick lined cellar under the front room. The front room incorporated a fine cast iron side range (of 1830-40s date) with swinging pot hook over the fire (Fig 13). The back room was floored in blue paviours and was apparently originally industrial in function, though subsequently screeded and used domestically (with a 1950s tiled fire surround). A further range of buildings extended to the north, and the presence of tethering rings in the western boundary wall indicates that these were stables. No evidence of the first floor of these buildings survived.

7 The Pottery – discussion (C Jane Evans)

7.1 This small evaluation produced a characteristic group of early Roman material, adding to the quantified evidence for this period in Worcester. The presence of forms associated with military activity is worth noting, and adds to the growing body of artefactual evidence for some form of military presence. The assemblage from the dark earth deposit contributes to the debate about what these dark earths represent in Worcester; some produce no pottery (Dalwood et al. 1994, Darlington and Evans 1992, 33), while another produced quantities of pottery derived from a nearby midden.

WCM fabric code	National Fabric code/Internal Fabric code	Common Name	Description/references (T&D = Tomber and Dore 1998)
3	MAL RE	Malvernian group A, handmade	T&D MAL REA, 147, plate 120; Peacock 1967
12	SVW OX 2	Severn Valley ware	Standard oxidised fabric, unsourced: T&D SVW OX 2, 149, Pl 122; Webster 1976, Rawes 1982, Hurst and Rees 1992, 202
12.1	SVW RE	Reduced variant	Standard fabric, reduced
12.2	SVW ORG OX	Organic variant, oxidised	Organic tempered variant, oxidised (elongated voids appearing as black/dark grey streaks in fracture, Hurst and Rees 1992, 202
12.21	SVW ORG OX F	Fine organic variant, oxidised	Fine organic tempered, cf Evans et al. 2000, 17 fabrics O1 and O5?
12.3	SVW ORG RE	Reduced organic variant	Darlington and Evans 1992, 37
13	SAND OX	Sandy oxidised ware	Hurst and Rees 1992, 202
14	SAND RE	Sandy reduced ware	Hurst and Rees 1992, 202
19	MAL RE A W	Malvernian group A, wheelmade	Hurst and Rees 1992, 203
22	DOR BB1	South-east Dorset BB1	T&D DOR BB 1, 127, pl 100; Williams 1977; Seager Smith and Davies, 1993
28	NVCC	Lower Nene Valley c. c. ware	T&D LNV CC, 118, pl 91 (orange fabric)
29	OXF RS	Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	T&D OXF RS, 176, pl 147
32	MAH WH	Mancetter Hartshill mortaria	T&D MAH WH, 189, pl 157a-d
33.3	OXF RS	Oxford Red-slipped mortaria	T&D OXF RS, 176, pl 147
38	OXF WH	Oxford White ware	T&D OXF WH, 174, pl 145-6a-b
40	OXF PA	Oxford parchment ware	T&D OXF PA, 174, pl 145
42.1	BAT AM 2	Amphorae, Dressel 20	Baetican Dressel 20, Peacock and Williams 1986, class 25; T&D BAT AM 2, 85, pl 62
43	SA	Samian (unclassified)	Possibly including T&D LGF SA, 28, pl 17; LMV SA, 30 pl 19

Table 3: List of fabrics represented

7.2 The significance of this assemblage will be more apparent when the pottery from the neighbouring, larger excavation at 14-24 The Butts has been assessed. A site visit by this

author, together with a rapid scan of the dark earth assemblage from the site, indicated similar early Roman material, characterised by rusticated jars, and significant quantities of pottery from dark earth deposits. Ideally the group reported on here needs to be published alongside the other assemblages from The Butts. This would provide a good body of quantified data with which to date and characterise Roman activity in this part of Worcester.

Fabric code	WCM Fabric Code	Qty.	Wt.	Rim EVE
SVW OX 2	12	173	1645	85
SVW RE 2	12.1	13	270	4
SVW ORG OX 2	12.2	62	957	66
SVW ORG OX F	12.21	14	420	17
SVW ORG RE	12.3	58	587	133
SANDOX	13	5	46	10
SAND RE	14	33	372	78
MAL RE A	3	17	441	0
MAL RE A W	19	16	235	36
DOR BB 1	22	24	225	29
LNV CC	28	1	28	0
OXF RS	29	9	65	0
MAH WH	32	6	146	10
OXF RS	33.3	1	26	9
OXF WH	38	2	9	0
OXF PA	40	2	4	0
BATAM 2	42.1	2	156	0
SA	43	15	79	13
TOTAL POTTERY		**453**	**5711**	**490**

Table 4: Summary of the pottery assemblage by Fabric

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated also included of 86.5g of medieval pottery and 2228g of post-medieval pottery, almost all of which was poorly stratified or residual – this material was not studied in detail.

8 Discussion

8.1 The deposits observed in the evaluation represent an unusually well preserved sequence of Roman deposits, apparently sealed in part by later Roman or immediately post-Roman "dark-earth" soils. The earliest Roman material (late 1st to early 2nd Century) appears to pre-date industrialization of the settlement (as there was no iron slag) but contained fragments of ceramic building material, probably *lydion* (a long flat brick) – clearly indicating the presence of masonry buildings in the vicinity at this early stage. It is of particular interest that these building materials were found with pottery generally associated with military sites. These early buildings were possibly the source for the re-used stonework observed in the 3rd-4th C well at 1 The Butts. The quantities of Roman building material of all types from the present site were, however, dramatically lower than on the site to the southern side of The Butts. The early pit [122] was sealed by a gravel surface (117), over which numerous large and unabraded sherds of late 1st-early 2nd C Severn Valley ware were spread. Whilst it would be tempting to interpret this as an early gravelled road surface (as seen by Barker to the south and again at Farrier Street to the north) the observed evidence is rather against this interpretation. The gravel layer was thin and not obviously worn or compacted, and sherds deposited on a roadway would very soon become crushed and abraded, which was demonstrably not the case here. The surfacing possibly represents some roadside area, but was clearly not exposed to great levels of foot or wheeled traffic. The small area of pebbled surfacing (118) in the central part of Trench 1 was even thinner, and consisted of finer grade stones - it was possibly even an internal surface. It was however very compact and the pottery crushed into the surface showed it had experienced some wear. The surfacing was not however in any way comparable with the previously observed road metalling which had built up to in excess of 1m thick at Blackfriars. It is of course feasible that the later Roman road metalling was deliberately removed from this area, (possibly part of the recorded quarrying by Andrew Yarranton in the late 17th C), but this seems implausible given the extreme difficulty of removing concreted slag which has both been compacted and fused by rust. Iron-rich slag could be freely recovered from dumps close to the surface in this area, and was readily available loose.

Excavating slag from a road would seem to be unnecessarily hard work. The sequence of post-medieval deposits within the evaluation trenches also does not indicate organised quarrying to the road levels, but rather piecemeal pit digging into the sand and gravel beneath.

8.2 The apparent absence of the road from the eastern part of the site might suggest that it passed further to the west or east than previously thought (the western end of Trench 1 had been severely affected by post medieval pit digging), but recent work by Birmingham Archaeology on the neighbouring site found no evidence of the road. A course to the east (under the Paul Pry) would require a substantial curve in the postulated alignment, there were also no traces of this route within surviving Roman deposits at 1 The Butts (Napthan, forthcoming). The metalling seen to the north at Farrier Street and in section at Cherrytree Walk was observed only over a very small area and seems much less certainly a road than that observed by Barker and Mundy to the south. The alignment of this section could also not be determined with accuracy. The absence of any confirmed metalling (despite several observations) to the north on the postulated alignment may indicate that the road observed by Barker and Mundy terminated in the Blackfriars area, perhaps serving only as access to the masonry building or buildings. Mundys observations suggested continuity of use of the road into the post Roman period, but it is clear that any through traffic had ceased by the 13th C. when the route was blocked by the City Wall. A probable minor road has been recently observed by Birmingham Archaeology on the site to the west (14-24 The Butts), but again the alignment is uncertain and throws little light on the nature of the Roman road system in this part of Worcester . Only further work could clarify this issue

8.3 The presence of an apparently near complete sequence of Roman deposits immediately beneath modern ground levels indicates the vulnerability of such significant deposits to even minor ground -works. Here the preservation to high level may be due to burial by Civil War period earthworks as the best preserved area was immediately behind the probably 17thC ditch line.

8.4 Small but significant quantities of medieval tile wasters were recovered from this site, indicating some tile making activity in the near vicinity. This would not be unexpected given the extra-mural location close to Blackfriars monastery, and the presence of both sand and clay in the immediate area.

8.5 The post medieval features were not studied in detail, but sufficient of ditch [104] was excavated to suggest that it was of mid-late 17th C origin and was possibly defensive. The documented existence of a Civil War earthwork in this area strengthens the evidence for [104] originating as part of an earthwork bastion.

8.6 The evaluation shows the potential for well-preserved assemblages of environmental remains to survive in Roman deposits. It is not possible to evaluate this potential for all periods across the site as other features were not suitable for sampling. Potential for recovery of well preserved assemblages of environmental remains has however been demonstrated from previous excavations as rich deposits of environmental remains of Roman date have been recovered from two sites in the vicinity at Farrier Street (de Rouffignac 1992) and at Blackfriars (Moffett 1987). Evidence of chaff-rich charred cereal crop waste, probably waste either from corn driers or fuel waste from domestic or industrial hearths, was found at both these sites.

9 Conclusions

The evaluation has demonstrated the survival of significant Roman deposits to a very high level within part of the plot. The presence of early Roman deposits, including material with military associations is of particular interest. The remainder of the site has remains of various post medieval activities, which are of lesser significance, but still of archaeological interest. It is to be regretted that the buildings were not recorded prior to demolition as it has not been possible to fully interpret the later post-medieval to recent functions of the site, and it would

appear that the cottage facing Infirmary Walk was probably the last remaining unaltered "one up one down" workers cottage in the City.

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Appendix 1: WCM 101173 8-12 The Butts - Context List

(101) Surface cleaning at west end of Trench 1
(102) Fill of [104] – probable ditch fill, arbitary context including several layers/lenses – principally dark grey brown sandy loam with occasional gravel lenses. Finds included moderate Roman pottery, occ medieval tile (including glazed and wasters), occ iron slag and very rare med and rare post medieval pottery. CTP also present in upper parts of fill, but very sparse in lower part of fill.
(103) Finds from interface of (102) and (114)/(117)/(120)
[104] Substantial cut, probably a ditch aligned SW to NE, approximately 4m wide, 2.5m deep – edges not defined, bottomed only by augering. Possibly turns or terminates close to eastern-most observed point. Steep "V" profile. Filled by (105), (107) and (102), uppermost fill (108). Cuts (112), (115) and (118)
(105) Lower fill, W end of [104] – grey brown sandy fill, overlying (107), overlaid by (102)
(106) Very dark grey clayey sandy loam fill of pit [124], frequent medieval tile and abundant iron slag
(107) Lowest excavated fill of [104] mid grey brown sandy loam, occ med tile, very rare post med pottery and moderate Roman pottery (some derived from fills of [122] cut by [104])
(108) Cleaning/uppermost fill of [104] at its eastern end. Fill contained abundant brick/ tile and mortar flecks.
(109) Cleaning over E end of Trench 1 – above (110)
(110) Slag-rich dark grey sandy layer "dark earth", very compact "trampled" consistency. Abundant small fragments of iron slag and moderate Roman pottery. 50mm deep arbitary spit. Occ post med pottery possibly intrusive.
(111) Similar to (110) – second spit of dark earth. Apparently cut by a number of stake-holes and containing very coarse tempered pottery ?Late Roman
(112) Third spit (cleaning only) of "dark earth" clearly cut by stake-holes and with lenses of compacted brown sand on surface.
(113) Sondage at west end of Trench 1 – into post medieval pit fill of dark grey sandy clay loam.
(114) Concreted iron-slag layer – not excavated, sealing (117) and sealed by (112). Depth appeared to be variable in section, not more than 0.3m thick maximum – not continuous in section. Contained void "imprint" of thin vertical plank within concretion. Slight greenish tinge to sandy matrix in which iron slag concreted. Single sherd of mortaria.
(115) Fill of pit [124] cut by [104] but fills barely distinguishable from (102). No finds could certainly be allocated to this context.
(116) Small exposed area of fine slag fragments and pea-gravel beneath (112) and possibly overlaid by (114) Overlay gravel surface (117).
(117) Gravel surface beneath (114) – compact large gravel in sandy matrix, sealed by a spread of Severn Valley ware sherds and occasional decayed crushed bone.
(118) Gravel surface with moderate spread of crushed Roman pottery on surface – cut by [104] and [125] Overlies brown sandy gravely layer which is probably natural gravel cap. Possibly equivalent to (117).
(119) Material recovered from interface of Post med ditch [104] and fills of Roman pit [122] – mostly derived from [122] but not certainly stratified.
(120) Uppermost excavated fill of pit [122] – Dark grey flecked greenish grey sandy fill with patches of ?burnt clay and ash, moderate charcoal, moderate Roman pottery, coin (Claudian copy?), very rare tile.
(121) Mid grey/brown sandy fill of [122], rare artefacts (substantial fragment of horned cattle skull) but moderate charcoal flecks. Fragments of *pilae*. Overlies (125) and (123)
[122] Large Roman pit – edges not seen but in excess of 3m diameter and at least 1.5m deep. Filled by contexts (120), (121), (123), (125) – source of some material in (119). Not fully excavated.
(123) Charcoal rich grey sandy fill of [122], abundant animal bone, frequent pottery, moderate burnt clay and occasional burnt cobble. Overlies further brown sandy fill of [122] – not fully excavated.
[124] Probable pit, at least 1m diameter, 0.85m deep, filled by (115) cut by [104]. Cut into natural and only partially exposed.
(125) Homogenous brown sand, occ charcoal flecks and pebbles, overlies (123), fill of [122] – only small area excavated.

Appendix 2: Worcester: Environmental remains from an evaluation at 8-12 The Butts Elizabeth Pearson

Table 1: Animal bone from sample residue from context (123)

Species	Element	Unfused	Measurable	No	Comments
Bovis	ulna?		0	2	
Equus	patella		Y	1	
Equus	humerus			1	part of shaft + prox end missing
Equus	femur		Y	1	
Equus	humerus		Y	1	likely pair of humerus above
Equus	metatarsal		Y	2	
Equus	radius+ulna		Y	1	radius whole, ulna distal
Equus	pelvis		Y	1	
Equus	metacarpal		Y	2	pair
Equus	radius		Y	1	
Equus	phalange		Y	1	
Equus	tarsal		Y	2	pair
Equus	calcaneus		Y	1	
Equus	vertebrae		0	2	thorasic
Equus	tibia		Y	1	
Equus	tarsal		0	1	
Equus	radius	?	0	1	Distal end
Equus	pelvis		0	1	
l ungulate	femur		0	2	
l ungulate	rib		0	1	
l ungulate	vertebrae		0	1	
Ovis/Capra	molar		0	1	
Ovis/Capra	horncore		Y	1	
Ovis/Capra	horncore		0	1	
Ovis/Capra	tibia		Y	1	
Ovis/Capra	ulna		0	7	
Sus	molar		0	1	
ungulate	unidentified		0	50-60	
ungulate	rib		0	5	

Table 2: Plant remains from pit fill (123)

Latin name	Family	Common name	Habitat	123
Hordeum vulgare grain	Gramineae	barley	F	2
Cereal sp indet grain	Gramineae	cereal	F	1
Gramineae sp indet grain (large)	Gramineae	grass	AF	2
Gramineae sp indet grain (small)	Gramineae	grass	AF	5
Montia fontana ssp *chondrosperma*	Portulaceae	blinks	E	1
Chenopodium album	Chenopodiaceae	fat hen	AB	1
Chenopodium glaucum/rubrum	Chenopodiaceae	glaucus/red goosefoot	AB	1
Atriplex sp	Chenopodiaceae	orache	AB	1
Vicia/Lathyrus sp (small)	Leguminosae	vetch/vetchling/pea	A	4
Melilotus/Medicago/Trifolium sp	Leguminosae	melitot/medick/clover	AB	2
Rumex acetosella agg	Polygonaceae	sheep's sorrel	ABD	5
cf *Rumex acetosella* agg	Polygonaceae	sheep's sorrel	ABD	1
Urtica dioica	Urticaceae	common nettle	CD	1
Eleocharis sp	Cyperaceae	spike-rush	E	4
Carex sp	Cyperaceae	sedge	CDE	1

Key:

Habitat
A= cultivated ground
B= disturbed ground
C= woodlands, hedgerows, scrub etc
D = grasslands, meadows and heathland
E = aquatic/wet habitats
F = cultivar

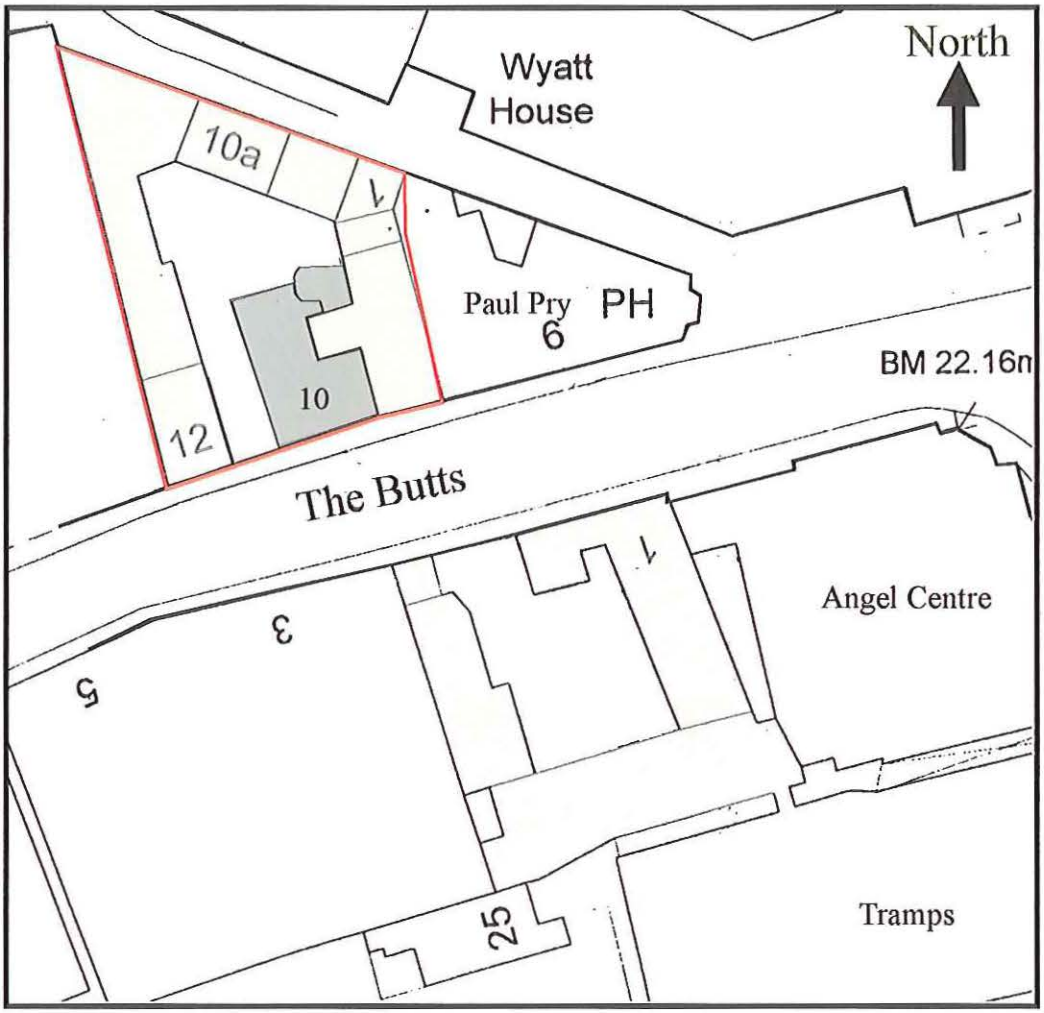
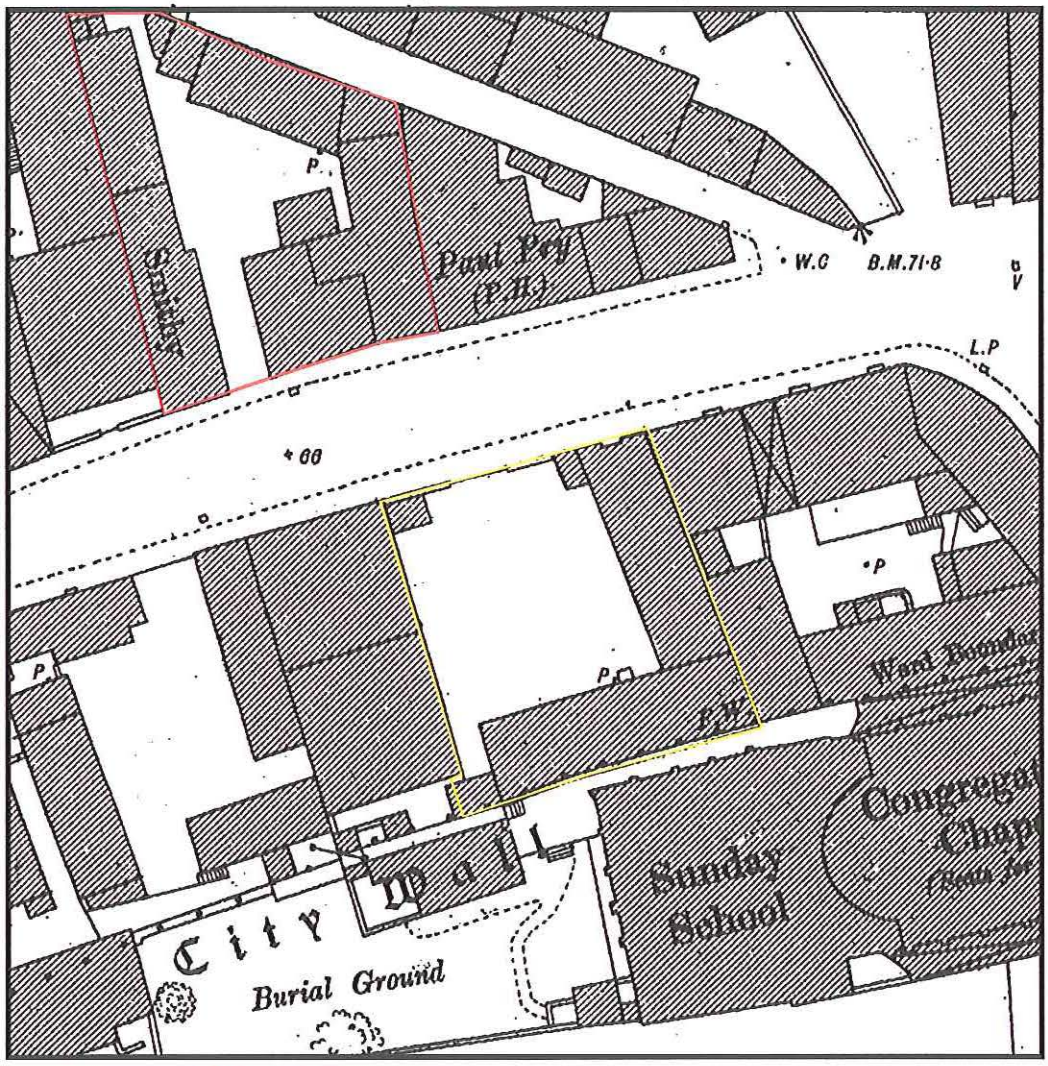
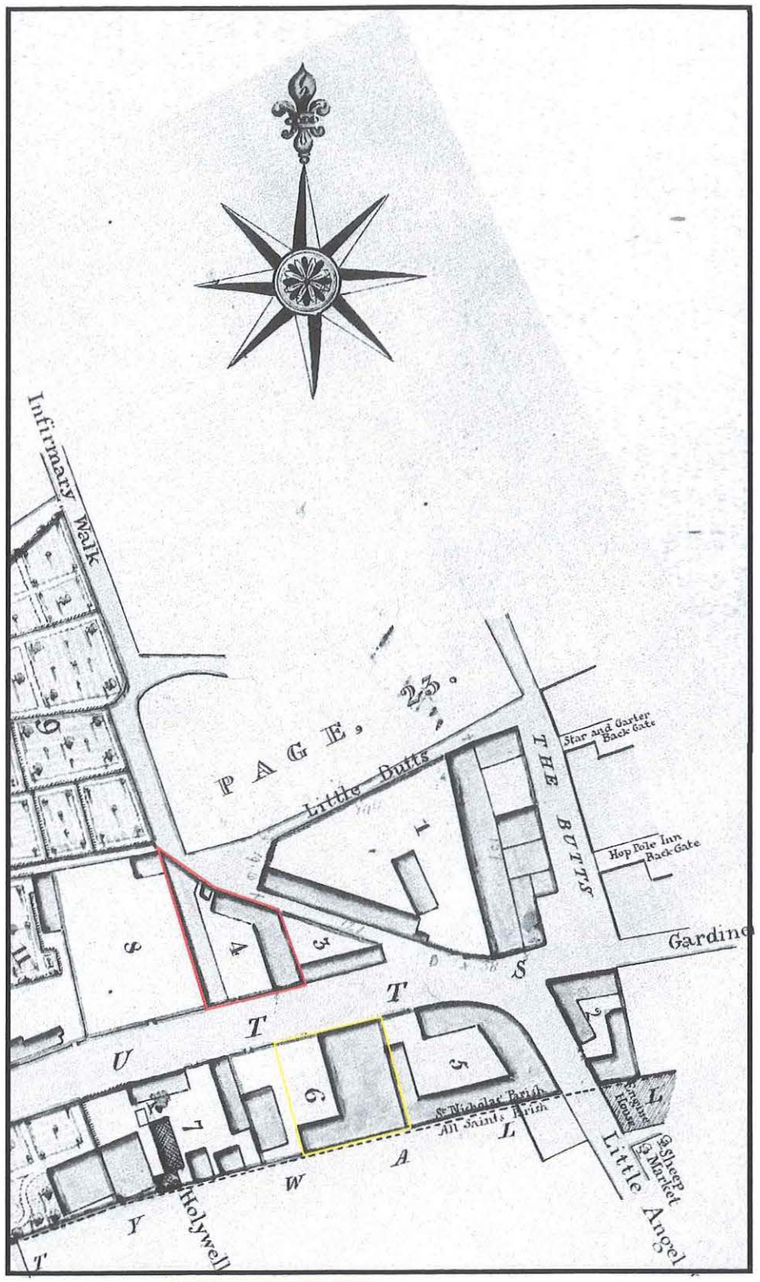


Figure 1: Recent OS mapping showing approximate extent of demolished buildings at 8-12 The Butts and 1 The Butts
Darker shading indicates buildings demolished between the 1960s and late 1980s
Scale 1:500



1 The Butts **8-12 The Butts**

Figure 2: The Butts - 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c. 1884 Scale approx. 1:500



1 The Butts **8-12 The Butts**

Fig 3: extract from Worcester City Plans Book (WRO BA 5182 f 926.11)

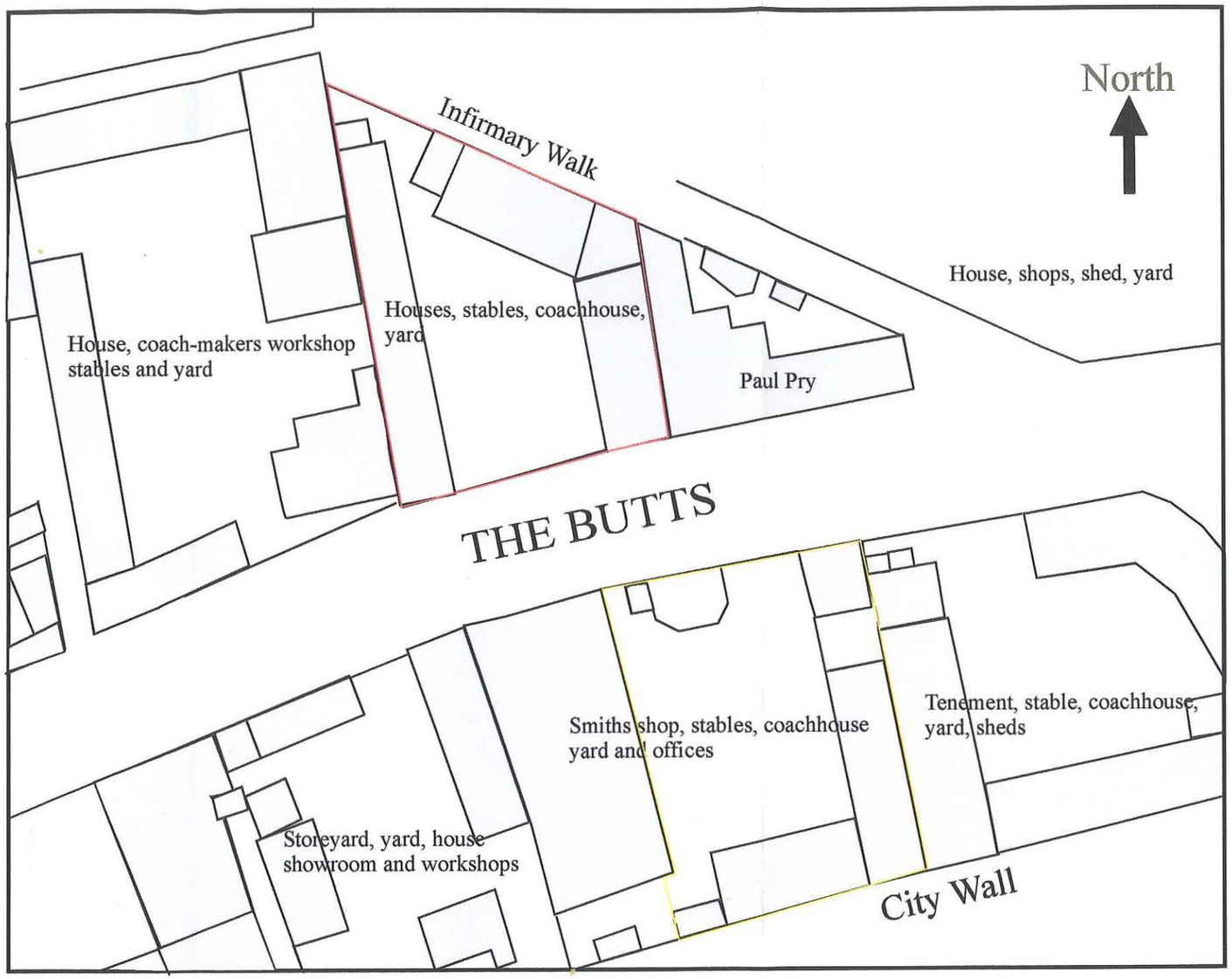


Fig 4: Extract from Netherton Estate plan 16 April 1846 (WRO BA8782/63 ref 899:749)

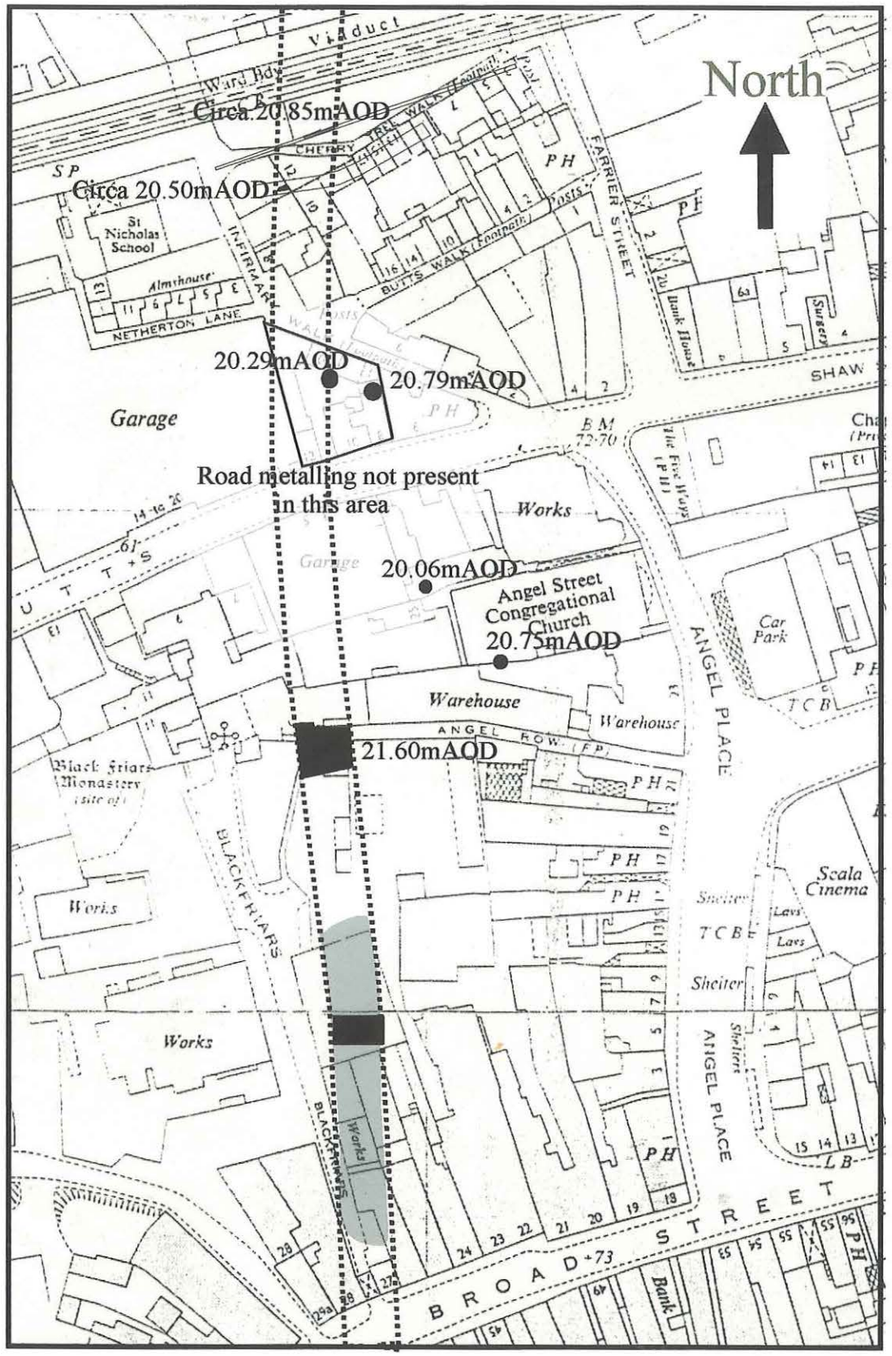


Fig 5: postulated line of Roman Road, and observed metalling showing height of surviving Roman deposits (nb based on 1960s OS mapping, precise location of metalling in Cherrytree Walk pipe trench uncertain from published information)

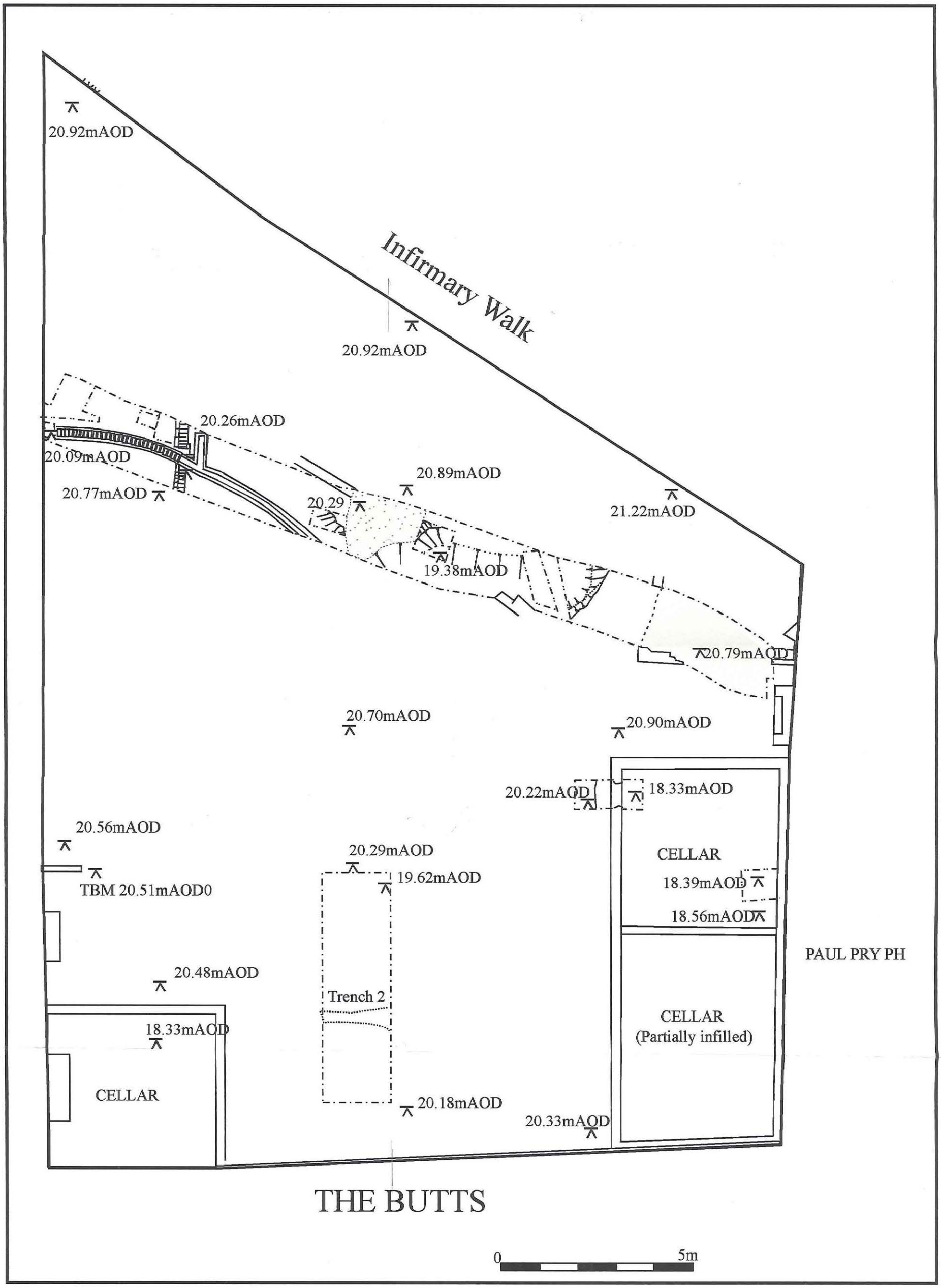


Figure 6:Trench layout/site plan - evaluation 8-12 The Butts (1:100)

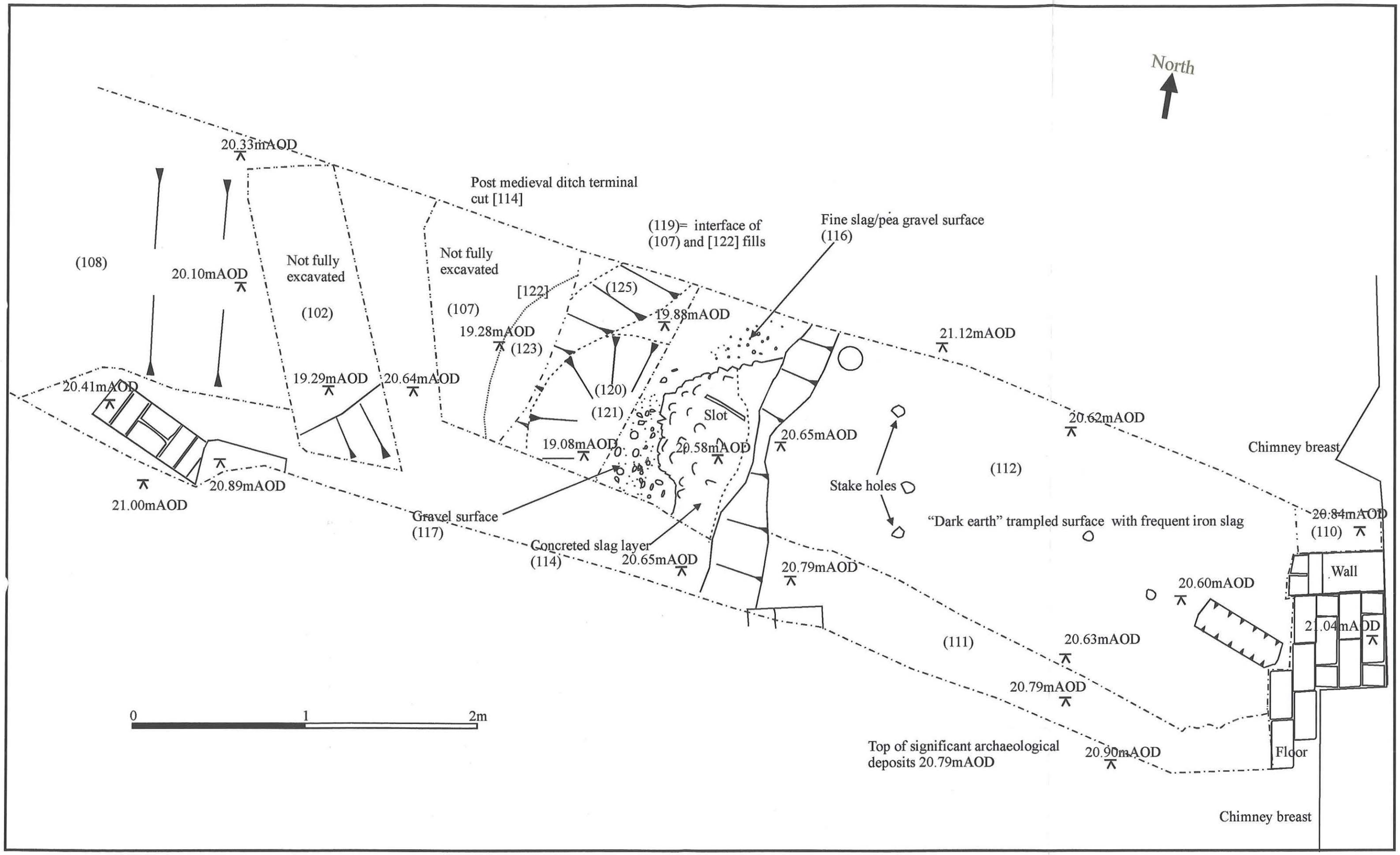


Figure 7: Trench 1, east end detail - Scale 1:50

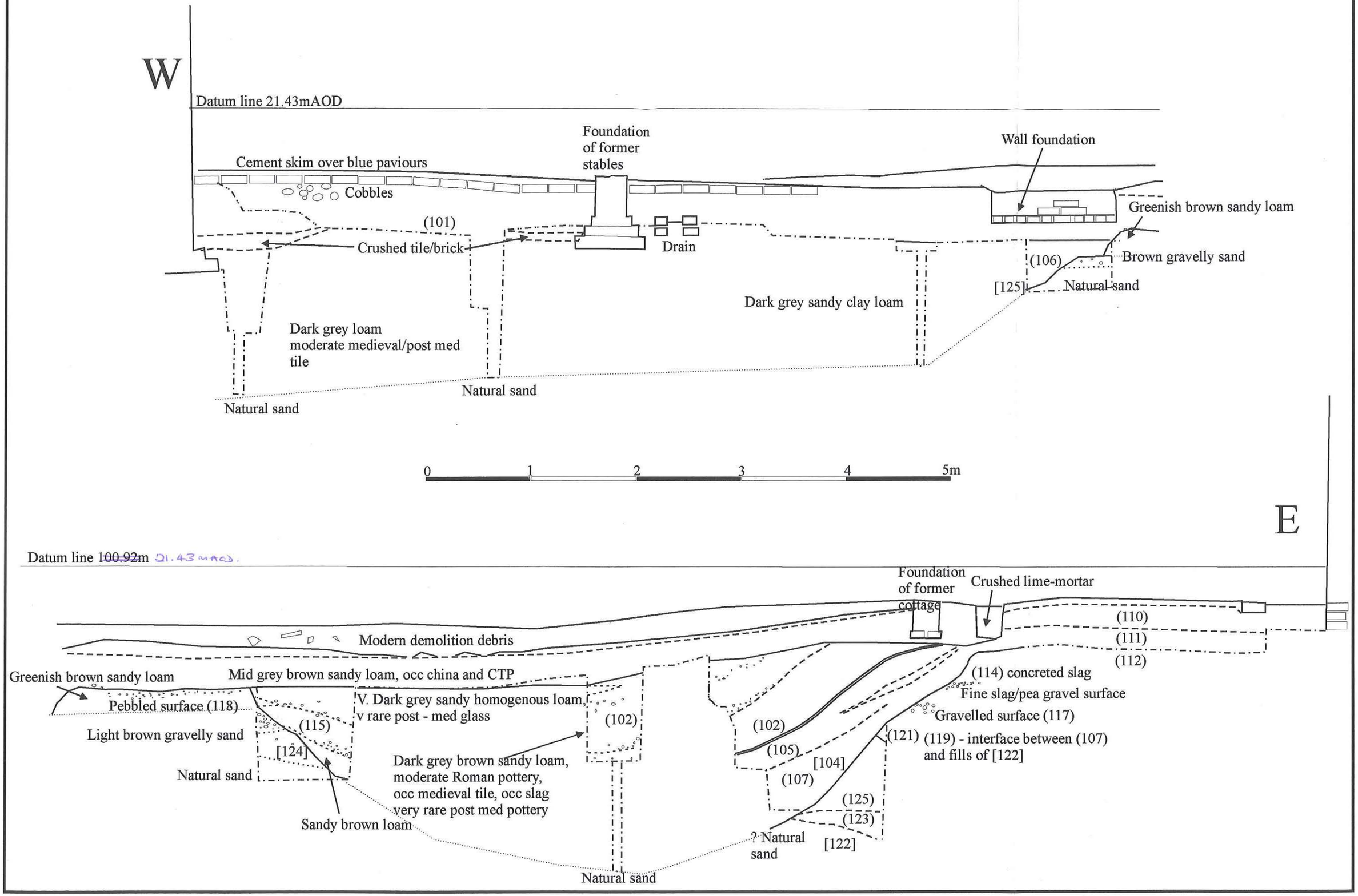


Figure 8: South facing section Trench 1

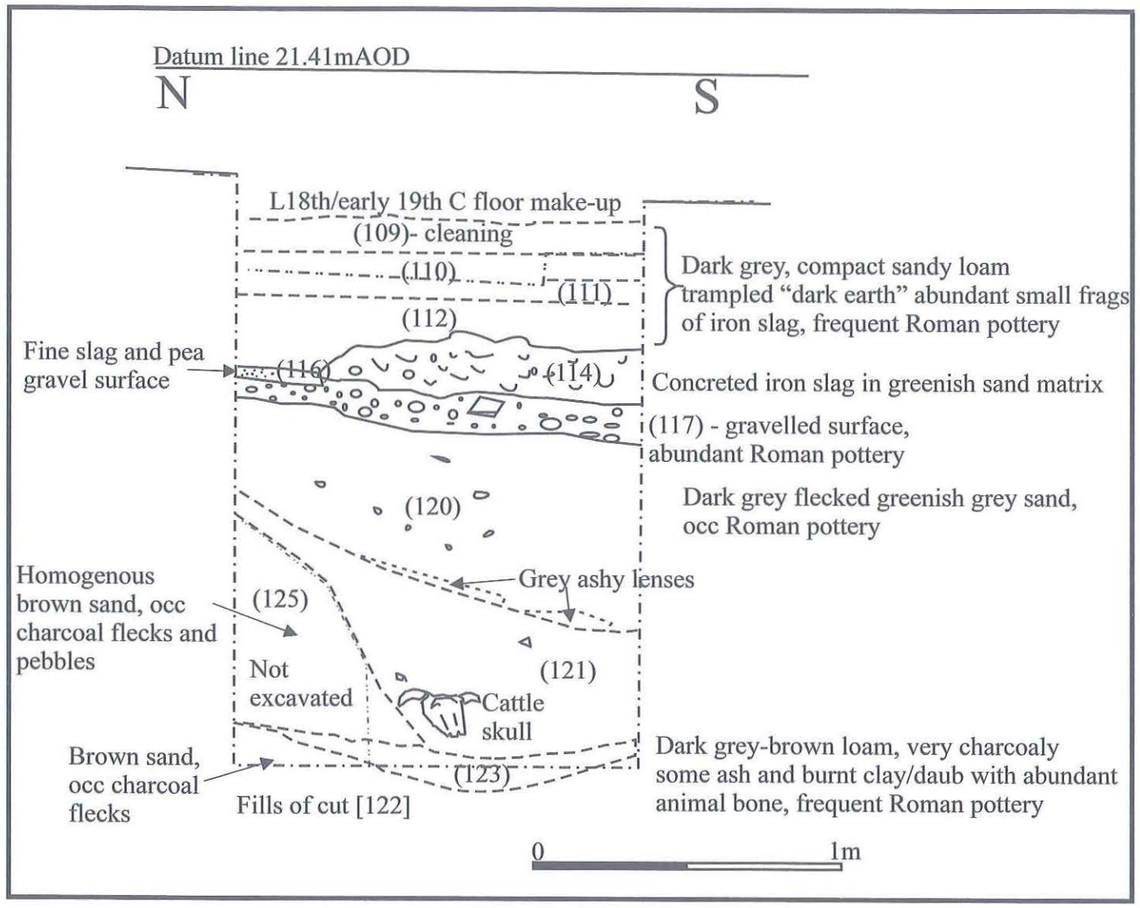


Figure 9: Section across fills of pit [122] and overlying layers (west facing)

Figure 10: 12 The Butts circa 1990

Figure 11: 8-10 The Butts May 2003 from the southeast

Figure 12: short-horned cattle skull (span of horns 300mm)from context (121) - early Roman pit

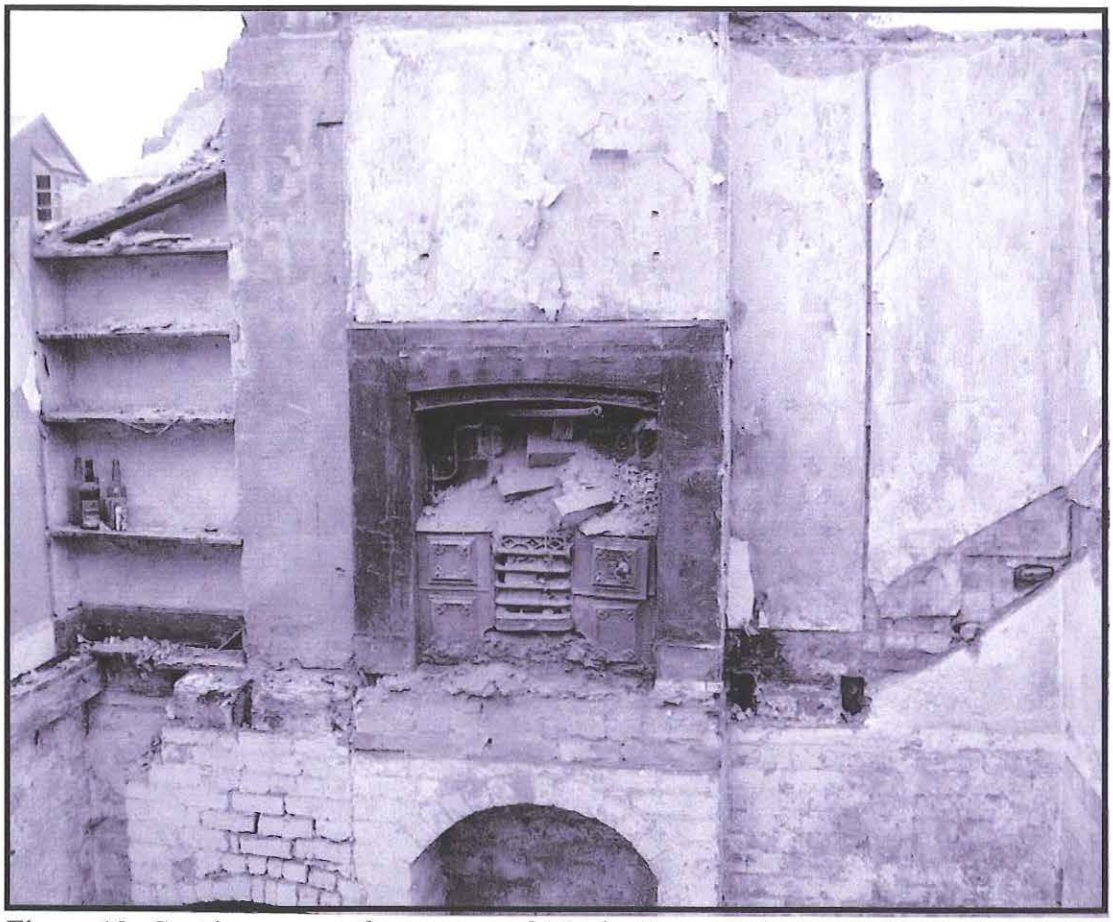


Figure 13: Cast iron range, front room of 12 The Butts, facing west