GORDANO SCHOOL, PORTISHEAD,

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client: Willmott Dixon Ltd

AB Heritage Project No: 11046

Site Code: WESTM17

Date: 12/12/2017

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Project Number	**11046**
Site Code	**WESTM17**
Prepared By	**L-P Archaeology & AB Heritage**
Illustrated By	**L-P Archaeology**
Managed and Approved By	**Daniel Dodds**

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An archaeological evaluation and subsequent archaeological watching brief were carried out by AB Heritage Limited (hereafter AB Heritage) on behalf of Willmott Dixon, using their elected contractor, L-P: Archaeology.

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to assess the complexity and state of preservation of archaeological remains within the boundary of a Scheduled Monument that partially intruded into the redevelopment site. The evaluation encountered some minor archaeological remains and an application was undertaken for full Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England with the provision that all further groundworks works were archaeologically monitored. Monitoring was subsequently undertaken for the entire site.

A number of ditches and gullies were recorded. These were cut into a layer of colluvium and sealed by Medieval plough soils. These features are likely to date between the late Roman and Medieval periods. Beneath the colluvium was recorded a buried land surface or levelling layer with considerable quantities of Late Roman pottery and single late 4th century coin.

Beneath these layers were a small number of features also dating to the Roman period, and possibly indicating the remains of stone structures or surfaces. These layers and features appear to occur across the area of the redevelopment site, and likely represent the remains of land use and occupation contemporary with the occupation of the Roman Villa site over which the Scheduled Monument site had been designated to the north.

The groundworks were typically shallow, and much of the very high potential for Roman Archaeology on site will remain un-impacted by the development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation and subsequent archaeological watching brief were carried out by AB Heritage Limited (hereafter AB Heritage) on behalf of Willmott Dixon Ltd, using their elected contractor, L-P: Archaeology.

1.1.2 This report considers land at Gordano School, Portishead (hereafter 'the site'). The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 346650, 175450 (Figure 1).

1.1.3 The site lies on the southern outskirts of the town of Portishead in North Somerset around 1.5km north of the M5 motorway and around 2km south of the Severn Estuary.

1.1.4 The fieldwork was carried out by Benjamin Sleep, Kelly Madigan, and Connor Law of L - P: Archaeology between 5th May and 21st July 2017, on behalf of AB Heritage Limited.

1.1.5 The site code provided by AB Heritage Limited is WESTM17.

1.1.6 The Local Planning Authority is North Somerset Council (NSC), who take advice from their Archaeologist Cat Lodge. Matters pertaining to the Scheduled Monument area and consent for development were advised upon by Hugh Beamish of Historic England (HE).

1.1.7 The work was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Daniel Dodds of AB Heritage Limited (AB Heritage, 2017B).

1.1.8 The following report details the results of both the initial archaeological evaluation, and the subsequent archaeological watching brief. The methodology and results of both are outlined separately, but the conclusions are drawn from both together.

1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 Planning background for the site is detailed within the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) for this work and should be consulted for further detail (AB Heritage, 2017A).

1.2.2 The necessity for archaeological evaluation and investigation of the site was outlined in section 2.1.3 of the WSI (AB Heritage, 2017B: 5).

1.2.3 The Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Planning, for the South West Region, Mr Hugh Beamish, has requested that archaeological monitoring of the removal of the ground slab of the recently demolished science block be undertaken; and that an evaluation trench be located within the boundary of both the proposed development and the Scheduled Monument, to inform on the state of preservation and likely complexity of archaeological remains, sufficient to gauge the level of harm the proposed development would have on the Scheduled Monument. This information then informed the level of further work to be carried out under Scheduled Monument Consent. The evaluation work was carried out under a Class 7 Scheduled Monument Consent.

1.2.4 This report details, in part, the results of the archaeological evaluation. As a result of the evaluation, the request was made by both Hugh Beamish of HE, and Cat Lodge of NSC to undertake archaeological monitoring in the form of a watching brief on groundworks, across the entire site.

1.3 Site LocationGeology & Topography

1.3.1 The British Geological Survey online Geoindex identifies the underlying solid geology as Mercia Mudstone Formation. No superficial geology is documented for the site (British Geological Survey 2017).

1.3.2 The results of the evaluation and watching brief recorded superficial deposits of colluvial and alluvial bands clay and silt.

1.3.3 The site lies at the northern edge of the Gordano Valley (Figure 1), formed from alluvial flats of mostly reclaimed land, that open up onto the Severn Estuary to the northeast. It is hemmed in to the north and south by Carbiniferous Limestone ridges, the northern of which runs from Clevedon to Portishead and bounds Gordano School to the west and north. Directly to the west the land begins to slope up towards West Wood, and to the north it slopes up towards Fore Hill. A natural gully is shaped between them which runs from north to south and opens directly onto the site of the school. This gully is now the route of St Mary's Road. Being reclaimed land, the Gordano Valley has no natural river, and is braided by irrigation channels called 'ryhnes'.

1.3.4 The site itself is a roughly rectangular plot at the eastern edge of the school complex and at the junction of St Mary's Road and Clevedon Road. The site slopes very gently down from northwest to southeast, with the ground surface averaging around 8m OD.

1.4 Archaeological Background

Prehistoric

1.4.1 Portishead is known to have had a transient population during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, evidenced by a small number of artefacts found in the area. Neolithic pottery has been recorded across Portishead, and a collection of Neolithic flints was recovered from just 20m north of the site.

1.4.2 The first signs of settled population in the area dates from the Iron Age, with evidence for activity from the period found during excavations of the Scheduled Monument site which forms part of the current archaeological evaluation.

1.4.3 The prominent topography of the ridge over which Portishead has been later constructed would have attracted populations throughout the Prehistoric, boasting great strategic views and a highly defensible position. This is further attested to by the numerous known hillfort sites on both the same ridge and similar ridges nearby in North Somerset.

Roman

1.4.4 During the Roman period, the area of North Somerset was not heavily populated in the urbanised sense. The pattern of settlement in the region was defined by villas. These were homes and estates of the wealthy, and included the country residence, agricultural buildings such as granaries and threshing floors, as well as accommodation for guests and slaves.

1.4.5 The Scheduled Monument site which overlaps the northern part of proposed development was designated over evidence of a Roman Building. This building was partially excavated by 'deep trenching' in 1956, the main occupation was broadly dated to between AD 250 and AD 350 and indicated a 'substantial masonry building' (Clevedon Brown 1956).

1.4.6 Further Roman remains, possibly of a kiln, were identified c.105m south of the proposed development site.

Medieval

1.4.7 The Domesday Book records that by 1086 all of Portbury hundred, of which Portishead was a part, was under the control of a single family, the Godwins (Brown & Loosley 1982). However, by the 13th century Portishead had been divided into two rival manors. The division of the Parish into two separate manors did not mean a complete division of land holdings, in fact Portishead was split into a number of large common fields (which survived in part until the Enclosure Act of 1809).

1.4.8 The Historic Landscape Characterisation shows that the area c.250m north of Gordano School and based around High Street was the Historic core of Portishead, with the areas to the west and south west shown as ancient woodland and areas of Medieval open fields from assart.

1.4.9 Archaeological work on the site of the Scheduled Monument identified the remains of a 15th century barn, and it should be considered that the site of the school lay in a Medieval landscape; probably in open fields.

Post Medieval

1.4.10 The town of Portishead expanded rapidly in the Post Medieval period and early Industrial period, with activity focussed around the docks, approximately 3km north of the development site. Supplementary industries such as fishing and tanning grew up around the port.

1.4.11 Around the area of the redevelopment site, and Gordano School more generally, several now Listed houses were constructed during the 18th and 19th centuries along St Mary's Road. These houses are typical for the period and attest to Portishead's growing prosperity during the period.

Modern

1.4.12 The topography of Portishead helped to disguise the rapid industrialisation of the town during the mid-19th century, encouraging tourists to come to enjoy the scenery. As a result, two railways arrived, one from Bristol and another light railway linking Portishead to the popular tourist towns of Clevedon and Weston Super Mare.

1.4.13 Throughout the 20th century, the industrialisation of Portishead expanded to include a large phosphorous works and two power stations, around 2km northeast of the redevelopment site.

1.4.14 With the decline of industry in the late 20th and 21st centuries, Portishead has transformed into a more residential town, and benefitted from a conversion of the docks into a large residential area and popular marina.

1.5 Map Regression

1.5.1 The earliest map consulted for the DBA dated to 1884 and depicted the site as divided between an open agricultural field to the west and a narrow strip of orchard to the east. A footpath traverses the site from northeast to southwest.

1.5.2 No change is depicted to the site itself up until the Map of 1968, where the development of the school has taken place, and the area immediately north of the site boundary is marked as the approximate position of the 'Remains of a Roman Building'.

1.6 Previous Archaeological Works

1.6.1 In addition to the excavation of the Roman Building in 1956 a number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken on the site of Gordano School.

1.6.2 Two evaluation trenches were excavated in 1997 by Avon Archaeological Trust, around 200m west of the site beneath the current sports centre. The work recovered unstratified Prehistoric flints and Romano-British pottery fragments and recorded substantial layers of naturally deposited silts and clays (Clarke 1997).

1.6.3 In 2001, Avon Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief on development around 60m southwest of the site. No significant archaeological finds or features were recorded (Young 2001).

1.6.4 In 2004, Bath Archaeological Trust undertook a seven-trench archaeological evaluation on an area of the school grounds around 165m south southwest of the site. In two of the trenches a Medieval or Post Medieval 'rough stone surface' was recorded, beneath around 1m of silting. Undulations nearby were also suspected to be the remnants of Medieval ridge and furrow (Lewcun 2004).

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims of Works

2.1.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains beneath the existing ground slab of the former Science Block and within the southern part of the Scheduled Monument boundary;
- To record the character, date location and preservation of any archaeological remains on the site;
- To assess the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological remains on site; and
- To assess the anticipated impact of the development proposals on any surviving archaeological remains.

2.1.2 The specific aims of the single trench Archaeological Evaluation were:

- To collect enough information to allow an informed decision for Scheduled Monument consent to be granted; and
- To collect enough information for a suitable mitigation strategy to be devised and presented in an updated WSI if necessary.

2.1.3 Subsequent to the completion of the evaluation, the specific aims of the watching brief were:

- To monitor all intrusive groundworks across the entire redevelopment site and archaeologically record any deposits, features or structures of significance that will be affected;
- To undertake work in accordance with national best practice and guidelines;
- To produce a written account to include: summary; site description; deposit descriptions deposit levels (relative to ordnance datum) conclusions and recommendations for further work; and
- To disseminate the findings of the work in an illustrated report, integrating the findings of the archaeological evaluation and watching brief to produce as comprehensive a record as possible.

2.2 Methodology of Work

2.2.1 For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to Section 4 of the WSI (AB Heritage, 2017B: 8).

2.2.2 The fieldwork was carried out between May and July 2017.

Archaeological Evaluation

2.2.3 The archaeological evaluation was conducted within the portion of the redevelopment site which fell within the designation of the Scheduled Monument.

2.2.4 The evaluation took the form of a single trench, 1.2m wide by 20m long, aligned southwest to northeast. The initial proposed width of 1.6m had to be narrowed to safely avoid services.

2.2.5 Excavation was undertaken with a 2 tonne 360-degree excavator. All overburden was removed, and excavation was continued with the intent to cease upon encountering a significant archaeological horizon or the natural (referred to in the WSI as 'subsoil').

2.2.6 Two archaeological features were encountered upon removal of the overburden, and excavation ceased. The trench was hand cleaned and a site visit was arranged with NSC archaeologist Cat Lodge, who discussed the findings with Hugh Beamish of HE.

2.2.7 The archaeological features found were excavated, recorded and sampled according to the methodology stipulated in the WSI.

Plate 1: Trench, post-excavation, with ditch [011] in foreground, facing southwest

Archaeological Watching Brief

2.2.8 Following the completion of the archaeological evaluation, it was determined by NSC and HE that a Watching Brief be undertaken on all groundworks in both the area of the Scheduled Monument and the wider development site.

2.2.9 Groundworks were monitored and all archaeological features to be impacted were recorded according to the methodology outlined in the WSI and adhering to the CIfA standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014).

3. RESULTS

3.1 The Stratigraphic Sequence

3.1.1 For the following results, deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets], deposits and cuts that Grouped are given a separate Group number in {braces}. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive.

3.1.2 Groundworks across the site were undertaken in discrete phases at different times. As such the following sequence is compiled from Grouping contexts found at similar depths, with very similar compositions across the site, and is only intended as a broad outline.

3.1.3 The uppermost layer of the sequence was the concrete slab, ducting and surrounding tarmac supported by a substantial layer of modern made ground across the entire site {108}, consisting of imported hardcore and crushed rubble. These occurred from 7.97 – 8.05m OD to a depth of between 7.70 – 7.75m OD, occurring deeper, to 7.40m OD the western portion of the site.

3.1.4 Below this was a layer of older made ground, of very disturbed redeposited clay silts, {109} with gravels and pebble inclusions, spread across all but the western portion of the site and occurring between 7.75 – 7.70m OD and 7.40 – 7.25m OD

3.1.5 Below this was a thick band of pinkish brown clay silt colluvium {110}, averaging 0.5m in thickness and occurring between 7.40 – 7.25m OD to 6.85 – 6.80m OD. In some places this colluvium was much thicker where the redeposited silty clay was not present (Plate 2).

Plate 2: Representative section showing deep colluvium {110} found across the site, observed atop the greyer silty clay layer {111}

3.1.6 Below this was a narrow band of grey-brown clay silt {111}, averaging 0.1-0.2m in thickness and occurring between a depth of 6.85 – 6.80m OD to 6.75 – 6.65m OD.

3.1.7 Below this was a narrow band of dark greyish blue silty clay {112}, with frequent inclusions of Romano-British pottery and bone fragments, which appeared to be a buried land surface or levelling layer, it was recorded in various sections and Grouped from contexts (044/050/070). It averaged 0.12m in thickness and occurred between 6.75 – 6.65m OD to 6.60 – 6.50m OD. This deposit was encountered at all parts of the site which were excavated at depth, with the exception of the southwestern area, where {111} appeared to sit directly atop {113}.

3.1.8 Below this was substantial layer of alluvium {113} which varied in colour from greyer at the top and bottom horizons, with a more reddish brown colour towards the centre. The composition was silty sandy clay. This layer could not be directly accessed and was only seen in section from the top of excavation. It measured approximately 0.5m in thickness, to a depth of around 6.00m OD.

3.1.9 Below this was yellowish red trias sandstone natural (100).

Plate 3: Close up of section showing colluvium {110}, cut to the left of shot by a ditch, and atop layers {111}, narrow darker band {112}and the upper horizon of {113}

3.2 Evaluation Results

3.2.1 The evaluation took place over three days and consisted of the excavation of a single northeast to southwest orientated trench within the boundary of the Scheduled Monument (Plate 1). The trench was 20m x 1.2m.

3.2.2 The trench was located on a tarmac surface. This was removed, followed by a substantial layer of construction sub-base laid on membrane to a depth of 0.6m. Beneath this was the colluvium layer {110}. Cut into this colluvium layer were one ditch feature and one possible posthole feature.

3.2.3 Machine excavation finished at the depth that archaeology was encountered at c. 7.35m OD.

3.2.4 The ditch was orientated north to south and located towards the northern extent of the trench. It measured 0.97m wide and 0.50m deep, between 7.35m OD and 6.85m OD (Figure 2).

3.2.5 The cut was regular and the sides moderately steep changing to vertical towards the base, which was slightly concave [011]. It contained two fills, the lower fill was dark greyish red relatively soft sandy clay (010) with pea gravels, the upper fill was a firmer but lighter brownish red silty clay (009) (Plate 4).

3.2.6 Possible posthole [013] was located around 15m southwest of ditch [011] (Figure 2). It measured 0.27m diameter with vertical sides. It was cut from 7.20m OD into colluvium {110}. No base was identified, despite reaching the blue grey silty clay layers {112} during excavation. It contained two fills, an upper grey clay silt fill (012) and a lower dark blueish grey silty clay fill (016).

Plate 4: Southeast facing section of ditch [011], facing northwest

3.3 Watching Brief Results

3.3.1 The watching brief section of the project required monitoring of 13 separate phases of groundworks, of varying extent and depth. The majority of groundworks did not excavate below 7.10m OD and therefore the lower layers, including the buried land surface/levelling layer {112} were only recorded in five areas of the site.

3.3.2 The following results are described in three broad phases; Phase 3 includes the most recent features, occurring at the highest level of surviving archaeology. Phase 2 consists of a number of drainage ditches and other features which are cut into the colluvium {110} and lower alluvial band {111}. Phase 1 consists of features cut into the lower alluvium {113} and the buried land surface/levelling layer which sealed them.

Phase 3

3.3.3 The features of this phase consisted of two parallel grubbed out wall type features, cut into an underlying ditch, encountered at the northern portion of the site, and likely Post Medieval in date (Figure 4).

3.3.4 The features consisted of a pair of parallel truncated grubbed out walls {107} / {114}. Extending for around 15m from southwest to northeast and between a depth of 7.71m OD and 7.10m OD.

3.3.5 Both features were of similar dimensions, around 1.2-1.5m in width, 0.6m in depth and between 0.3-0.05m apart. The south-eastern feature {114} was truncated at its southern edge by a later construction of levelling cut [017].

3.3.6 Both features had shallow sided cuts on their north-western edge and steep on their south-eastern edge, with tapered, gutter like bases [022] / [027].

3.3.7 Both contained upper fills of very dark blackish grey sandy gravel and medium sized limestone stones (Figure 3), with numerous inclusions of molten slag type material, possibly representing modern contamination (019) / (024). Below this both contained a red sandy gravel layer with abundant small-large sandstone blocks (020) / (025). The lower fills of both were a yellowish sandy gravel with abundant large blocks of yellowish limestone, some of which appeared to have been structural and emplaced (021) / (026).

Plate 5: Southwest facing section of features {107} and {114}

3.3.8 Further to the northeast {107} contained only a single fill of dark brownish silt and limestone, and appeared to have been heavily truncated. Feature {114} was completely truncated by later construction at this point.

3.3.9 Both features were cut into the fill of a broad ditch [029], which may be a construction cut.

3.3.10 Finds from the middle fills of both features included modern CBM, bottle glass, and Post Medieval field drain fragments. The upper darker fills of both contained numerous pieces of slag and ‘pyrotechnical residues’.

Phase 2

3.3.11 Phase 2 consisted of numerous features cut into the colluvium {110}.

3.3.12 Most substantial of these features were a number of ditch cuts observed in discrete areas of groundworks towards the eastern and southern areas of the site, and appearing to form a large boundary or drainage ditch (Figures 4 & 5).

3.3.13 Two sections of a north-south running ditch were excavated. The northernmost section [069] was excavated in an area between groundworks phases in order to meet the requirements for recording of the feature, and in anticipation of it being encountered further north on the site [116], and delaying future groundworks (Figure 4).

Plate 6: South facing section of ditch seen in south facing wall of sondage

3.3.14 Ditch cut [069] was 2.60m in width and 0.48m deep with steep regular sides, and a relatively flat and even base (Figure 5 / Section 11), occurring between 7.18m OD and 6.70m OD. It had an upper homogenous fill of light reddish grey clay silt, and a lower fill of reddish brown grey clay silt, this lower fill contained three residual fragments of Iron Age date pot (Section 7.3).

3.3.15 The ditch also truncated the lower layer (103) (Group {111}) and buried land surface/levelling layer (070) (Group {112}), the latter containing numerous fragments of Roman British pottery. A later field drain partially truncated the western edge of the ditch.

3.3.16 Sealing the ditch was a darker buried plough soil type layer (066), containing a Ham Green ware pottery fragment, dated to between c. AD 1120 -1250.

3.3.17 Nine metres to the south was recorded what appeared to be a continuation of the same ditch (the section was oblique due to restrictions of groundworks and concrete piling, and thus the true width of the ditch in section 10 is distorted) (Plate 7). Cut [052] was of similar width with similar upper (042) and lower (043) fills, and truncating the lower grey alluvial layer (096) (Group {111}). The lower fill (043) contained two Romano-British pottery fragments.

3.3.18 This ditch was also sealed by a dark buried soil layer (041) containing a single Medieval pot fragment.

Plate 7: Partial section of ditch [046], facing southeast

3.3.19 Continuation of this feature was found in groundworks to the north [116] and in shallow groundworks a few metres south of section 10 ([082]). Further excavation was not required, as groundworks were too shallow to impact the features

3.3.20 An east to west running ditch ([052] / [080]) (Figure 4), was recorded to the east of the site, with very similar dimensions and form to the north-south running ditch described above. Groundworks to the east appear to reveal the point near the convergence of the north-south and east-west ditch, but no relationship could be established.

3.3.21 An oblique section of [052] was excavated (Figure 5). Upper and lower fills were similar to that of [042] and [069] and sealed by dark buried soil. The ditch truncated a buried surface/levelling layer (050) containing Romano-British pottery fragments (Section 7.4). Beneath this was grey sandy clay silt grey alluvial layer atop a layer of limestone, possibly either a wall or stone track (102).

3.3.22 A number of other features were recorded during groundworks for piling caps and drainage ([056] / [060] / [054] / [058]), towards the west of the site, and included a number of possible ditches, gullys and possible pits cut into the colluvium {110} (Figure 5). All were only partially revealed, and none were excavated, due to constraints, and being below the maximum construction depth.

<u>Phase 1</u>

3.3.23 Phase 1 consists of those features cut into the lower alluvial layer (Group {113}.

3.3.24 Only two areas of groundworks excavated deep enough to reveal the lower alluvial layer {113}. One of these areas, excavation for the installation of a grease trap within the Scheduled Monument area to the west of the site, had to be recorded at a distance and sampled mechanically, due to safety concerns.

3.3.25 A pair of parallel gullies ([037] / [039]) were recorded sealed beneath grey alluvial layer {111}, and cut into the lower alluvium ((040) Group {113}) in the far southwest of the site (Figure 6), cut from around 6.70m OD. They measured between 0.45m and 0.39m in width, approximately 1.10m apart and orientated east-west. Both had fills of mid brownish grey sandy clay silt with stone inclusions.

3.3.26 The fill of gully [039] contained two sherds of Roman British pottery and one sherd of Iron Age sandy ware. The alluvial layer that sealed the gullies ((035) / Group {111}), also contained Romano-British pot sherds and a Prehistoric flint. Neither of the gullies could be fully excavated due to safety considerations.

3.3.27 The following description of contexts is based upon observations at distance of uncleaned sections (Figure 6).

Plate 8: South facing wall of grease trap excavation

3.3.28 The excavation revealed the remains of a possible grubbed out wall or foundations (089) sealed beneath buried surface/levelling deposit {112}. This was a brownish grey silty clay containing abundant large blocks of limestone, including a piece of probable stone tile and 5 sherds of Romano-British greyware. A construction cut for this material appeared to run north-south [095], appearing in the north and south facing section of the excavation.

3.3.29 This feature was cut into the lower alluvium {113} which lay atop the natural trias sandstone. Towards the west of the excavation appeared to be a cut into the trias, [096] with a very dark blue clay fill (095), containing three pieces of animal bone. This feature appeared to be sealed by alluvium {113} and likely dated to the Prehistoric.

4. FINDS REPORT

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This report has been produced by Lorraine Mepham of Wessex Archaeology.

4.1.2 A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the site, dominated by pottery, with other material types occurring in very small quantities. The date range of the assemblage is Prehistoric to Modern. All finds have been quantified (count and weight) by material type within each context; details of all finds are presented in Appendix 1.

4.2 Pottery

4.2.1 Pottery was the most commonly occurring material type encountered on the site. The assemblage amounts to 117 sherds (759 g), and this ranges in date from Late Prehistoric to Medieval, with a focus on the Romano-British period.

4.2.2 Condition ranges from fair to poor. The assemblage is very fragmentary, with very few conjoining or same-vessel sherds, and levels of surface and edge abrasion are high. Mean sherd weight is 9.3 g.

4.3 Prehistoric

4.3.1 Seven sherds are Prehistoric, and these have been tentatively (and broadly) dated as Iron Age on fabric grounds alone, as none are diagnostic; three are in fine-grained sandy fabrics, and four in calcareous fabrics (probably calcite-tempered). Iron Age sherds provide the only dating evidence for alluvial deposit (045) and ditch [069] (lower fill (068)), while one sherd was residual in Romano-British ditch 039 (fill (038)).

4.4 Romano-British

4.4.1 The majority of the assemblage is Romano-British (107 sherds; 728 g). This small assemblage includes local and regional wares, and one continental import. The latter is a sherd from a form 31 platter in Central Gaulish samian. Regional wares comprise Oxfordshire finewares and south-east Dorset Black Burnished ware (BB1). Three mortaria sherds in oxidised fabrics, from buried surface/levelling layer (071) and alluvial layer (072), possibly all from the same wall-sided vessel (Young 1977, type M14, dated c. AD 180–240) are the only definitively identified Oxfordshire wares; these are all very abraded body sherds, and both the trituration grits and the colour coat have completely worn away. Other fine-grained, micaceous oxidised wares, however, may also be of Oxfordshire origin. No sherds of Severn Valley ware were definitively identified.

4.4.2 As well as Black Burnished ware, the coarseware component of the assemblage includes greywares, oxidised wares and one grog-tempered sherd; all are within the expected range of Romano-British wares for the region, and are likely to include the products of several local, and possibly regional, sources. Vessel forms include everted rim jars, a lipped bowl and one bead-rimmed form; the latter is probably of Early Roman date, but the jar rims are not closely datable. The Black Burnished ware forms are more chronologically distinctive. Two straight-sided ‘dog dishes’ (buried surface/ levelling layer (071), ditch/wall construction trench [095]) are probably of later 2nd century AD date or later; four jar rims (all from layer (071)) are of mid-

to late Roman form, and a dropped flange bowl (ditch [046]) dates to the later 3rd or 4th century AD (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, types 20, 2/3 and 25 respectively). Body sherds of BB1 from possible buried soil (050) show late surface treatments (external white-firing slip).

4.4.3 Roughly two-thirds of the Romano-British assemblage (64 sherds) came from possible occupation layer 71; other sherds occurred in very small quantities in various features and layers (ditch [011], posthole [013], alluvial layer (035), ditch [039], ditch [046], layer (047), possible buried soil (050), buried surface/levelling layer (051), alluvial layer (070), alluvial layer (072), fill (089), ditch/wall construction trench (095).

4.5 Medieval

4.5.1 There are three Medieval sherds. All are glazed wares of Bristol or Bristol area origin: two Ham Green (layer (047) and buried soil (066)) and one Redcliffe ware (layer (041)). All three almost certainly belong to jugs; the Redcliffe ware sherd carries an applied thumbed strip. Ham Green wares are dated from c. 1120 (Ponsford 1991), and these wares are generally superseded by Redcliffe wares, which are dated c. 1250–1500.

4.6 Ceramic Building Material

4.6.1 Nine fragments of CBM were recovered (weighing a total of 246 g). Eight of these belong to modern brick and tile: unglazed wall/floor tile and air brick. These fragments came from feature [022], ditch [029] and modern drainage feature [065]. The remaining fragment (also from feature (065)) is un-diagnostic but probably Post Medieval.

4.7 Slag

4.7.1 Seven small fragments have been recorded as slag, although only two (feature [022] and ditch (069)) are likely to result from metalworking – in this case iron smithing. The remaining five fragments, all from feature [033], include possible clinker, and can be described as residues from unspecified pyrotechnical activity. None of the slag is intrinsically datable.

4.8 Coin

4.8.1 A coin was found in buried surface/ levelling layer (071). This is a copper alloy Roman issue. It is in poor condition and illegible, but can be dated to the late 4th century AD on flan size.

4.9 Animal Bone

4.9.1 Only a small amount of bone was recovered. Of the 28 fragments of animal bone recovered (260 g), 21 are identifiable to species; these are limited to cattle (16), sheep (4) and horse (1).

4.10 Other Finds

4.10.1 Other finds comprise a Prehistoric flint waste flake (residual in alluvial layer (035)), a stem fragment from a Post Medieval clay tobacco pipe (buried soil) (066)), a fragment from a modern green bottle, and a slab-like piece of micaceous sandstone, possibly a tile of uncertain date (fill (089)).

4.11 Potential & Further Recommendations

4.11.1 This is a small assemblage of finds, and its archaeological potential is correspondingly limited. Pottery has provided the primary dating evidence for the site (Iron Age to Medieval), with the single coin (Romano-British), and it is unlikely that any further analysis would be able to refine this significantly. In any case, in most instances quantities of pottery per feature were too low to provide firm dating evidence for the features in which they were found. Other material types were found in insufficient quantities to warrant further analysis, given the date range (many finds of modern date, or undated), and the absence of any items of intrinsic interest.

4.11.2 All finds have been recorded to an appropriate archive level, and no further analysis is proposed. Should further mitigation work take place on the site, this assemblage should be reviewed in the light of any further material recovered.

4.11.3 The Post Medieval/Modern and undated finds (clay pipe, glass, CBM, animal bone, slag, stone) do not warrant retention for long-term curation, but the pottery should be retained.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction & Methods

5.1.1 This Environmental Sample Assessment was undertaken by Matthew Law.

5.1.2 Ten bulk samples of sediment from archaeological fieldwork at Gordano School, Portishead, North Somerset, were presented for assessment.

5.1.3 The samples were processed in a Siraf-style flotation tank. The heavy fraction ('residue') was caught on a 1mm mesh, while the washover ('flot') was caught on a 250µm mesh sieve. The residues were air dried and weighed prior to being sorted. The flots were weighed wet then scanned for biological remains under a low power binocular microscope.

5.1.4 Assessment of biological remains was carried out under a low power microscope at 10X magnification.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Abundances of biological remains from the samples are presented in Appendix 2. Samples 3 and 4, two fills of a possible posthole, were contaminated with bitumen. There was slight bitumen contamination of sample 6 as well.

5.3 Discussion

5.3.1 Biological remains are unevenly present throughout the assemblage. The most diverse assemblages come from the ditch fills, contexts (009) and (010), samples 1 and 2 (the former is the uppermost, latest, fill). These contain charred grains, seeds, snail shells and bones. The grains are evidence of the economy at the site. The seeds are of elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and a Rubus species, probably bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) These are both edible species, but their seeds may also be ingested and then excreted by birds and small mammals. They are robust seeds, which survive well in many situations where other seeds would not be preserved.

5.3.2 The snail assemblage from samples 1 and 2 comprises three species associated with long vegetation or shaded places, and may suggest some shrubs growing around the ditch. The bone assemblage includes both probable food remains, and small mammal bones (likely to be shrew).

5.3.3 The bitumen-contaminated posthole fills, contexts (012) and (016) contained few biological remains, although there were three pieces of Romano-British pot in the lower fill (016), as well as a piece of (unidentifiable) medium to large mammal bone and nine pieces of charcoal.

5.3.4 The dark fill of a Post-Medieval track or wall, context (032) contained residues of an industrial process. This was largely non-magnetic, and did not contain any obvious tap slag with flow markings.

5.3.5 The residue of sample 6, from Romano-British wall fill (089) contained nine fragments of charcoal, two small fragments of animal bone, and three shells of the snail Trochulus striolatus. This is a catholic species, associated with a wide range of habitats.

5.3.6 The fill beneath a wall, context (090) contained one piece of charcoal, two fragments of bone, and one small sherd of Romano-British pot.

5.3.7 Sample 8, from dark deposit (093) contained only fragments of animal bone.

5.3.8 Sample 9, from context (092), contained two charred grains, two fragments of bone, and three sherds of Romano-British pot.

5.4 Statement of Potential & Recommendations

5.4.1 Overall, there are few biological remains in the samples. This is likely to be due to a lack of waterlogging at the site. The remains recovered largely relate to food consumed and cooked at the site, although samples 1 and 2 contain snails and small mammal bones that suggest an at least partially shaded environment in the ditch. There is no evidence from the samples of permanent standing water in the ditch.

5.4.2 The charred grain assemblage from samples 1 and 2 has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the range of foods available to occupants of the site. Analysis is recommended. The grain may also be suitable for radiocarbon dating via accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) if required.

5.4.3 The remainder of the biological remains assemblage is too small to carry any interpretative value. No further work is recommended. Disposal of this material is recommended.

6. DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 An archaeological evaluation and watching brief was carried out at Gordano School, Portishead, North Somerset, during all intrusive groundworks between May and July 2017. Groundworks involved the excavation of numerous discrete areas to varying depths, offering a limited view of the archaeological horizons onsite.

6.1.2 There were three broad phases of activity on the site. The latest phase was Post Medieval and consisted partly of a wall or track type feature made of local limestone and sandstone. The actual function of these features is not certain.

6.1.3 In addition, a number of areas revealed a buried Medieval plough soil layer, which appeared to have been truncated by the school construction across much of the site, but remained preserved in the hollows left by larger ditches. This attests to agricultural use of the area during the period, and relates to the known Medieval barn found directly north of the site boundary (AB Heritage, 2017A: 9).

6.1.4 The second phase of the site relates to the large ditches and features found cut into the colluvium {110} which covers the site. Dating evidence from these features ([011] / [046] / [069]) was limited to a small number of Romano-British and Iron Age pottery sherds, and not enough for a secure date. Ditches [046] and [069] were cut into Romano-British buried surface/levelling layers and the finds in the lower fills are almost certainly residual. Environmental data gathered from samples 1 and 2, representing upper (009) and lower (010) fills of ditch [011] did indicate seeds that would be possible to date using AMS, and would be the only way to securely date this phase of the site.

6.1.5 The larger ditches have a broad and flat base with regular side with fills that are generally homogenous and silty. They were likely cut for drainage purposes and are similar to the drainage ditches that still braid the wider Gordano Valley, known locally as ‘rhynes’.

6.1.6 The earliest broad phase of the site consisted of a band of alluvium {111} sealing a buried surface/levelling layer {112}, which sealed a small number of features cut into a thicker band of alluvium. Alluvium {111} was of consistent thickness across site and relatively sterile, the few Romano-British and one Prehistoric find from this layer, are likely to be residual, and may indicate a flooding event.

6.1.7 The dark colour of layer {112} is indicative of a land surface which was rapidly covered, and the range of material recovered from the layer would indicate a surface level from late 2nd to late 4th century.

6.1.8 Relatively few deep archaeological excavations have been undertaken in the Gordano Valley, but comparisons from The North Somerset Levels and the Avonmouth Levels to the north of the site, show that these areas were drained extensively during the Late Roman period (Rippon 2004: 115). Most of these sites were abandoned or depopulated after the collapse of Roman influence during the early 5th century and similar sites located on the foots of slopes at the edge of levels have encountered Roman archaeology sealed beneath bands of colluvium of similar depth and consistency to that of {110} (Masser *et al*. 2005: 84).

6.1.9 Beneath layer {112}, the large stone filled ditch or construction trench [095], along with the stone layer (102) found towards the east of the site, indicate that structures or trackways associated with the Roman Villa site may continue further south than the boundary of the

Scheduled Monument. Brief comparison with the report on the excavation of Scheduled Monument show that features [095] and [102] occur at the same depth as some of the Romano-British walls found (Clevedon Brown 1956). The Previous archaeological investigation by Bath Archaeological Trust which encountered 'Medieval' stone surfaces under 1m of alluvium may also in fact be at the same level as these Romano-British features.

6.1.10 The lower alluvial layer {113} is also consistent with known Late Prehistoric flooding events on the North Somerset Levels (Rippon 2004), the possible ditch [096] sealed by this, is likely to be of earlier Prehistoric date.

6.1.11 The archaeology of Phase 3 was destroyed after recording. The archaeological remains of Phase 2 were only impacted in small discrete areas of the site which required deeper groundworks. Phase 1 of the site was impacted in very few areas, and there is a very high potential for the preservation of Roman and Prehistoric remains intact, beneath the new development.

6.1.12 It is recommended that no further fieldwork is required for discharge of the archaeological condition.

7. ARCHIVE

7.1.1 The archive is to be deposited by arrangement with the Museum of Somerset with the allocated code WESTM17.

7.1.2 The paper archive consists of:

- 1 x Photographic Register
- 1 x CD Digital Photographs
- 104 x Context Sheets
- 9 x Sheets of Permatrace
- 9 x Sample Sheets
- 45 x Watching Brief Day Sheets

8. OASIS

9. REFERENCES

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Appendix 1: Table of Finds

Context	Material type	No	Wt (g)	Comments	Date
(009)	POTTERY	1	13	GREYWARE	RB
(016)	POTTERY	2	3	GREYWARE	RB
(019)	SLAG	1	44	IRONWORKING	UNDATED
(020)	CBM	3	50	WALL/FLOOR TILE; AIRBRICK FRAGMENTS	MODERN
(028)	CBM	2	108	BRICK FRAGS	MODERN
(028)	GLASS	1	33	CYLINDRICAL GREEN BOTTLE	MODERN
(032)	CBM	1	15	FIELD DRAIN	POST-MED
(032)	SLAG	5	56	PYROTECHNICAL RESIDUES	UNDATED
(035)	POTTERY	2	3	GREYWARE	RB
(035)	WORKED FLINT	1	1	FLAKE	PREHIST
(038)	POTTERY	1	1	SANDY WARE	IRON AGE
(038)	POTTERY	1	2	BLACK BURNISHED WARE; TINY BEADED RIM	RB
(038)	POTTERY	3	13	GREYWARE	RB
(041)	POTTERY	1	14	REDCLIFFE WARE; GLAZED; APPLIED THUMBED STRIP	MEDIEVAL
(043)	POTTERY	1	11	GREYWARE; EVERTED RIM JAR	RB
(043)	POTTERY	1	28	BLACK BURNISHED WARE; DROPPED FLANGE BOWL	RB
(045)	ANIMAL BONE	1	1	SHEEP TOOTH	UNDATED
(045)	POTTERY	3	6	CALCAREOUS WARE	IRON AGE
(047)	POTTERY	1	2	BLACK BURNISHED WARE	RB
(047)	POTTERY	1	8	HAM GREEN WARE, GLAZED	MEDIEVAL
(050)	ANIMAL BONE	1	2	UNIDENTIFIABLE TO SPECIES	UNDATED
(050)	POTTERY	7	21	GREYWARE; 1 EVERTED RIM JAR	RB
(050)	POTTERY	2	16	BLACK BURNISHED WARE; LATE SURFACE TREATMENT	RB
(050)	POTTERY	3	27	OXIDISED WARE	RB
(051)	POTTERY	1	9	GREYWARE; BEADED RIM	RB
(063)	CBM	3	73	2 WALL/FLOOR TILE; 1 UNDIAGNOSTIC	MODERN
(066)	CLAY PIPE	1	4	PLAIN STEM FRAG	POST-MED
(066)	POTTERY	1	8	HAM GREEN WARE, GLAZED	MEDIEVAL
(068)	POTTERY	1	4	CALCAREOUS WARE	IRON AGE
(068)	POTTERY	2	20	SANDY WARE	IRON AGE
(068)	SLAG	1	57	IRONWORKING	UNDATED
(070)	ANIMAL BONE	2	26	UNIDENTIFIABLE TO SPECIES	UNDATED
(070)	POTTERY	2	6	GREYWARE	RB
(070)	POTTERY	3	18	BLACK BURNISHED WARE	RB
(071)	ANIMAL BONE	8	101	2 CATTLE TEETH; HORSE TOOTH; SHEEP TOOTH; 4 UNIDENTIFIED	UNDATED

(071)	COPPER ALLOY	1	1	COIN, LATE C4 AD	RB
(071)	POTTERY	7	33	OXIDISED WARE (SOME OXON?)	RB
(071)	POTTERY	2	10	OXFORDSHIRE MORTARIUM (TYPE M14)	RB
(071)	POTTERY	1	12	CENTRAL GAULISH SAMIAN, FORM 31 PLATTER	RB
(071)	POTTERY	1	23	GROG-TEMPERED WARE	RB
(071)	POTTERY	24	165	BLACK BURNISHED WARE: 4 EVERTED RIM JARS, 1 'DOG DISH'	RB
(0710	POTTERY	29	157	GREYWARES: 3 EVERTED RIM JARS, 1 BEAD RIM BOWL	RB
(072)	POTTERY	2	16	BLACK BURNISHED WARE	RB
(072)	POTTERY	4	14	GREYWARE	RB
(072)	POTTERY	1	1	OXFORDSHIRE MORTARIUM (TYPE M14)	RB
(089)	ANIMAL BONE	1	95	CATTLE TIBIA	UNDATED
(089)	POTTERY	5	91	GREYWARE: 1 LIPPED BOWL	RB
(089)	STONE	1	651	SLABLIKE PIECE (THICKNESS 23MM), MICACEOUS SANDSTONE; PROB BUILDING MATERIAL (TILE?)	UNDATED
(090)	ANIMAL BONE	12	24	FRAGMENTS: CATTLE RIB AND TOOTH	UNDATED
(090)	POTTERY	1	10	BLACK BURNISHED WARE: 'DOG DISH'	RB
(093)	ANIMAL BONE	3	11	CATTLE INCISOR; SHEEP METACARPAL (SAMPLE 8)	UNDATED

Context Number	9		10		12		16		32	
Sample Number	1		2		3		4		5	
Context Description	Upper ditch fill		Lower ditch fill		Upper posthole fill		Lower posthole fill		Dark fill of track/wall	
Provisional Date	Roman		Roman		Roman		Roman		Post-Medieval (Tudor?)	
	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue
Weight after processing (g)	46 (wet)	921 (dry)	35 (wet)	1400 (dry)	17 (wet)	230 (dry)	33 (wet)	360 (dry)	312 (wet)	33700 (dry)
% modern roots			c.80							
Notes		Residue sterile		Residue sterile		Residue sterile	Contains Bitumen			
CHARCOAL								9 (2g)		
CHARRED GRAIN	21		25							
SEEDS										
Rubus sp.	1		2							
Sambucus nigra	6		1							
SHELL										
Discus rotundatus	2									
Clausiliidae	2									
Trochulus striolatus	2									
BONE		11						1		
SMALL MAMMAL BONE		2		1						
SLAG									A (115g)	A (2680g)
POT								3 (7g)		

Context Number	89		90		93		92	
Sample Number	6		7		8		9	
Context Description	Fill associated with Roman 'wall'		Possible fill beneath 'wall'		Very dark discrete deposit beneath 904		Levelling/occupation layer	
Provisional Date	Roman		Prehistoric/ Roman		Prehistoric/ Roman		Roman	
	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue	Flot	Residue
Weight after processing (g)	16 (wet)	1110 (dry)	16g (wet)	15900g (dry)	487 (wet)	404 (dry)	46 (wet)	1730 (dry)
% modern roots							c.80	
Notes	Contains bitumen							
CHARCOAL		9 (3g)						
CHARRED GRAIN			1				2	
SEEDS								
Rubus sp.								
Sambucus nigra								
SHELL								
Discus rotundatus								
Clausiliidae								
Trochulus striolatus		3						
BONE		2 (7g)		2		4		2
SMALL MAMMAL BONE								
SLAG								
POT				1 (1g)				3 (7g)

Estimated abundance scale: A = >500; B = 100-500; C = 50-100; D = 10-50; E = 1-10

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

OASIS ID: abherita1-302112

Project details

Project name	Gordano School, Portishead
Short description of the project	Evaluation and Watching Brief report
Project dates	Start: 05-05-2017 End: 21-07-2017
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	VILLA Roman
Monument type	BARN Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Roman
Methods & techniques	"Documentary Search","Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTH SOMERSET NORTH SOMERSET PORTISHEAD AND NORTH WESTON Gordano School, Portishead
Postcode	BS20 7QR
Study area	0 Hectares
Site coordinates	ST 466 754 51.474551993737 -2.76896209209 51 28 28 N 002 46 08 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 8m Max: 8m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	AB Heritage Limited
Project brief originator	English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator	AB Heritage Limited
Project director/manager	AB Heritage Limited
Project supervisor	L - P: Archaeology
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Willmott Dixon Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Somerset County Museum, Taunton
Physical Archive ID	WESTM17
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Environmental"
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Somerset County Museum, Taunton
Paper Archive ID	WESTM17
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Section"

Entered by	Daniel Dodds (dan@abheritage.co.uk)
Entered on	24 November 2017

OASIS:

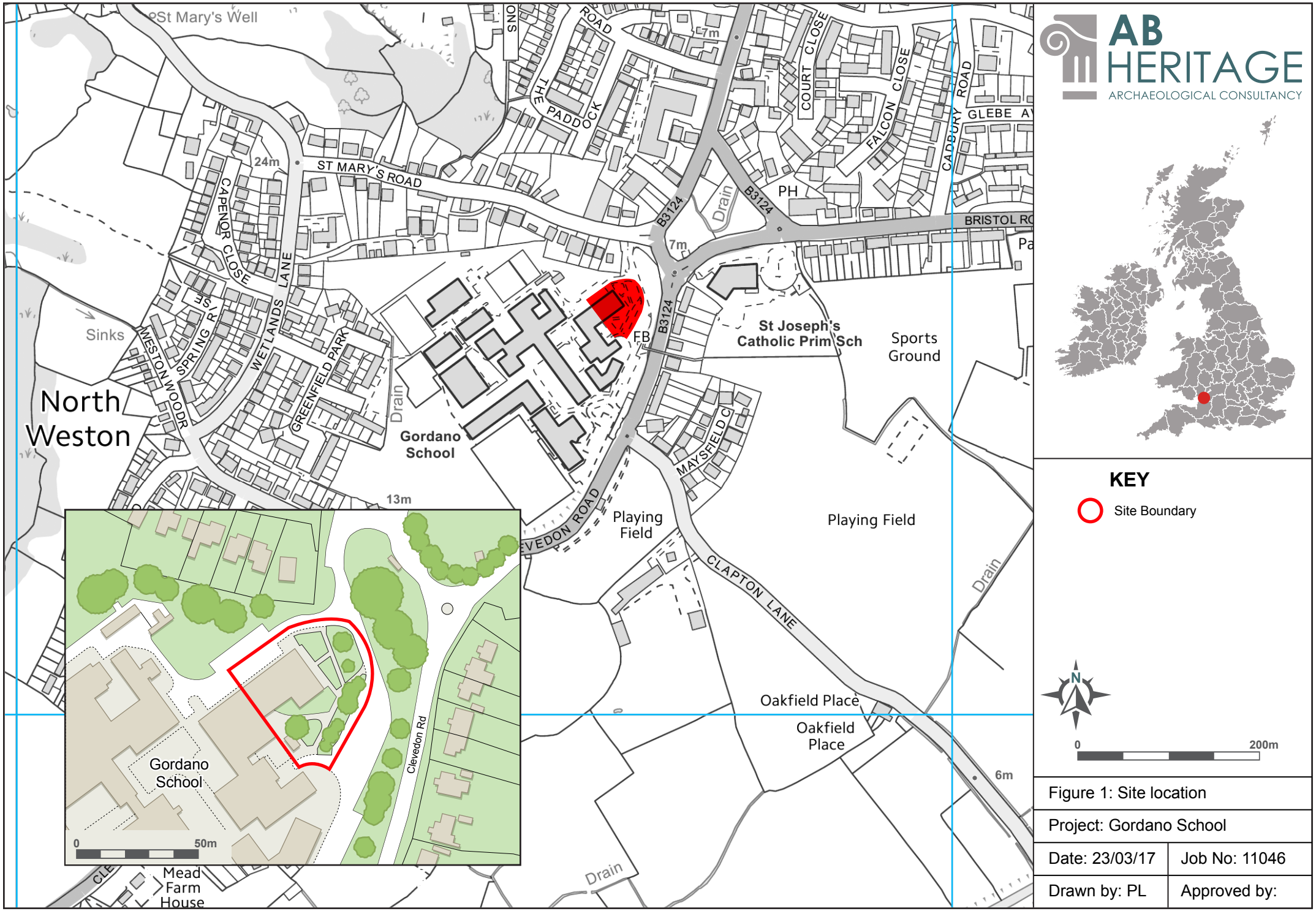

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Figure 1: Site location	
Project: Gordano School	
Date: 23/03/17	Job No: 11046
Drawn by: PL	Approved by:

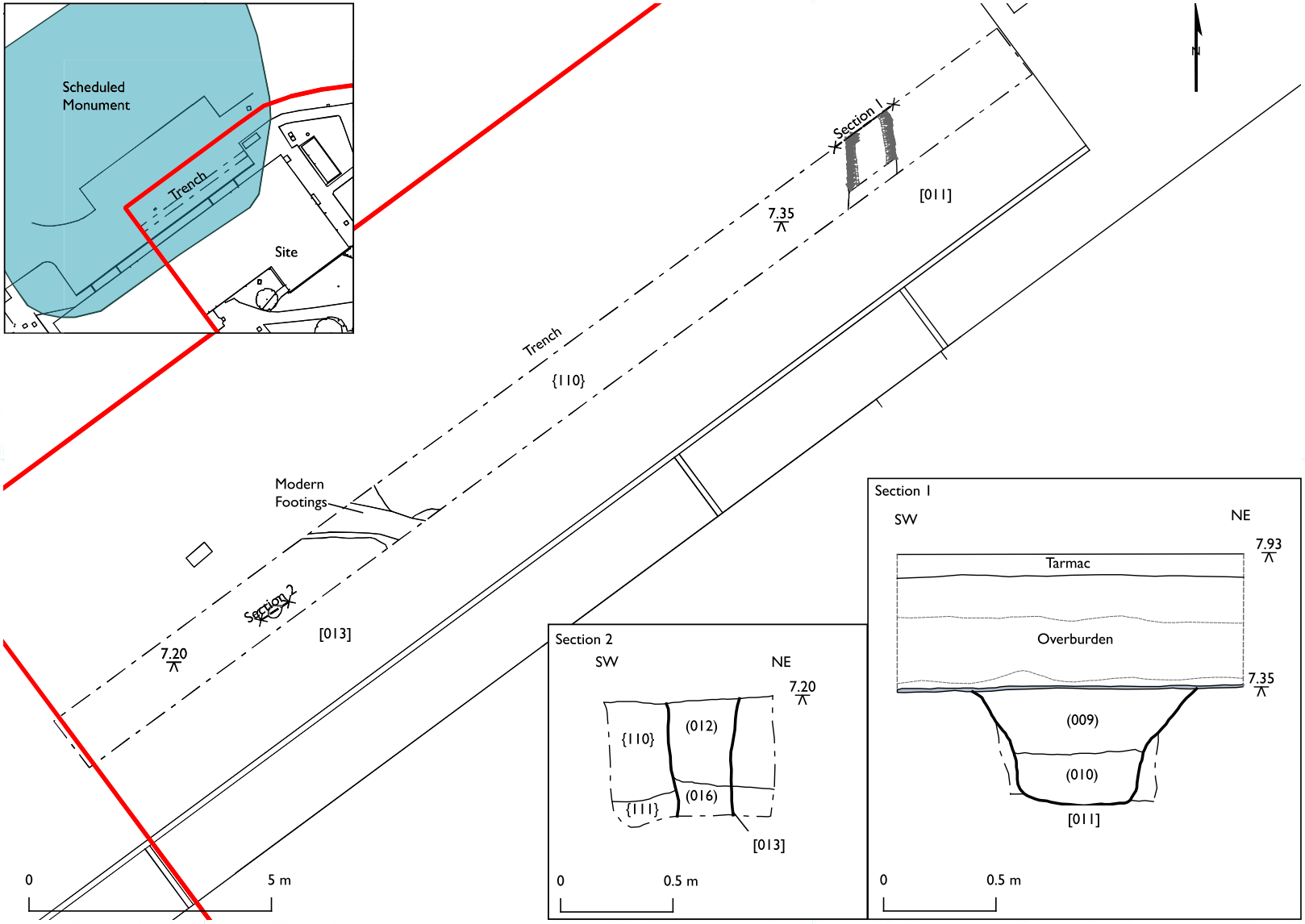

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Figure 2. Evaluation Results

Job. 11046 | 22-11-2017

Drawn by: Pighill

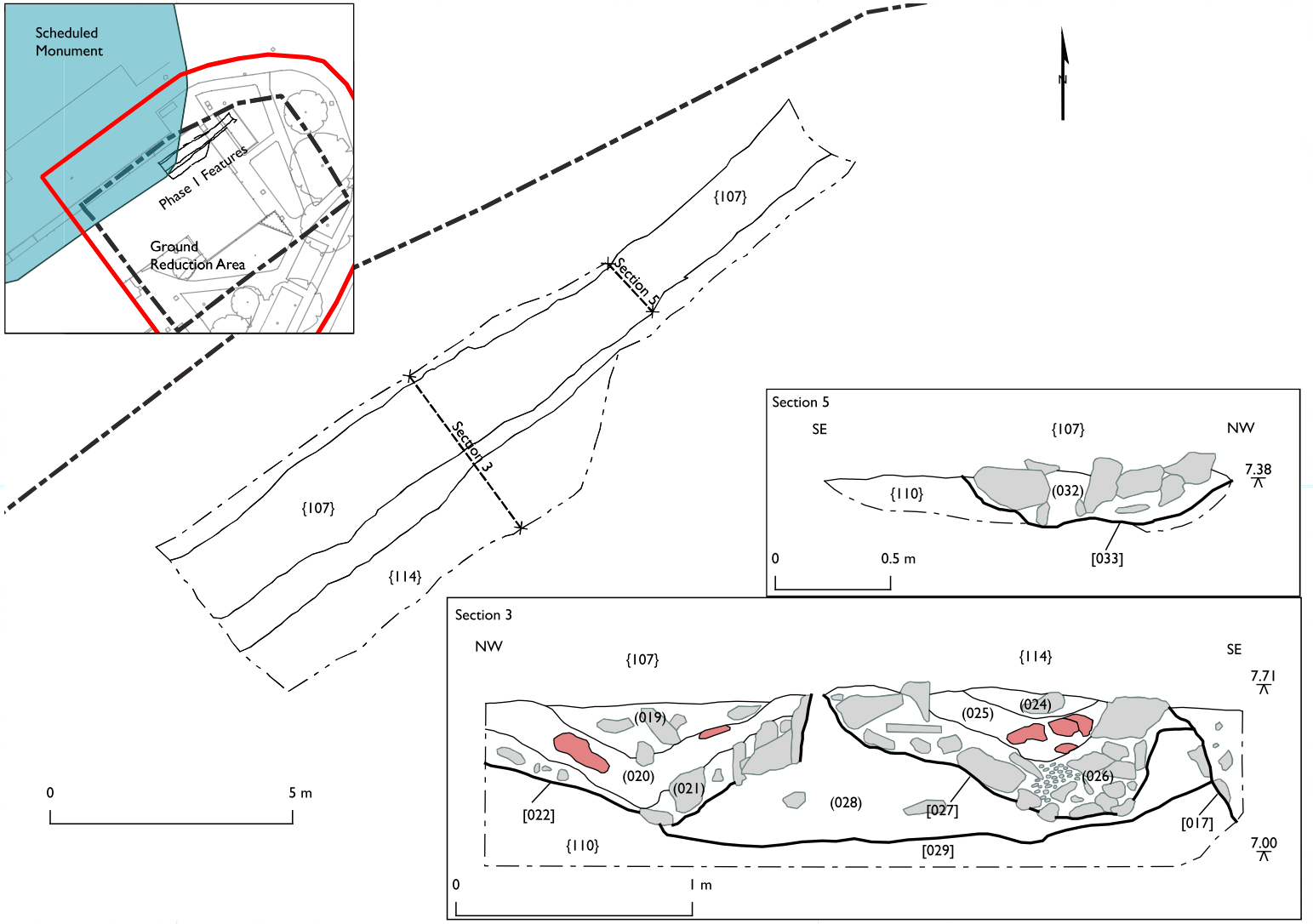

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Figure 3. Phase 3
Post Medieval Features

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Figure 4. Phase 2 Earlier Features

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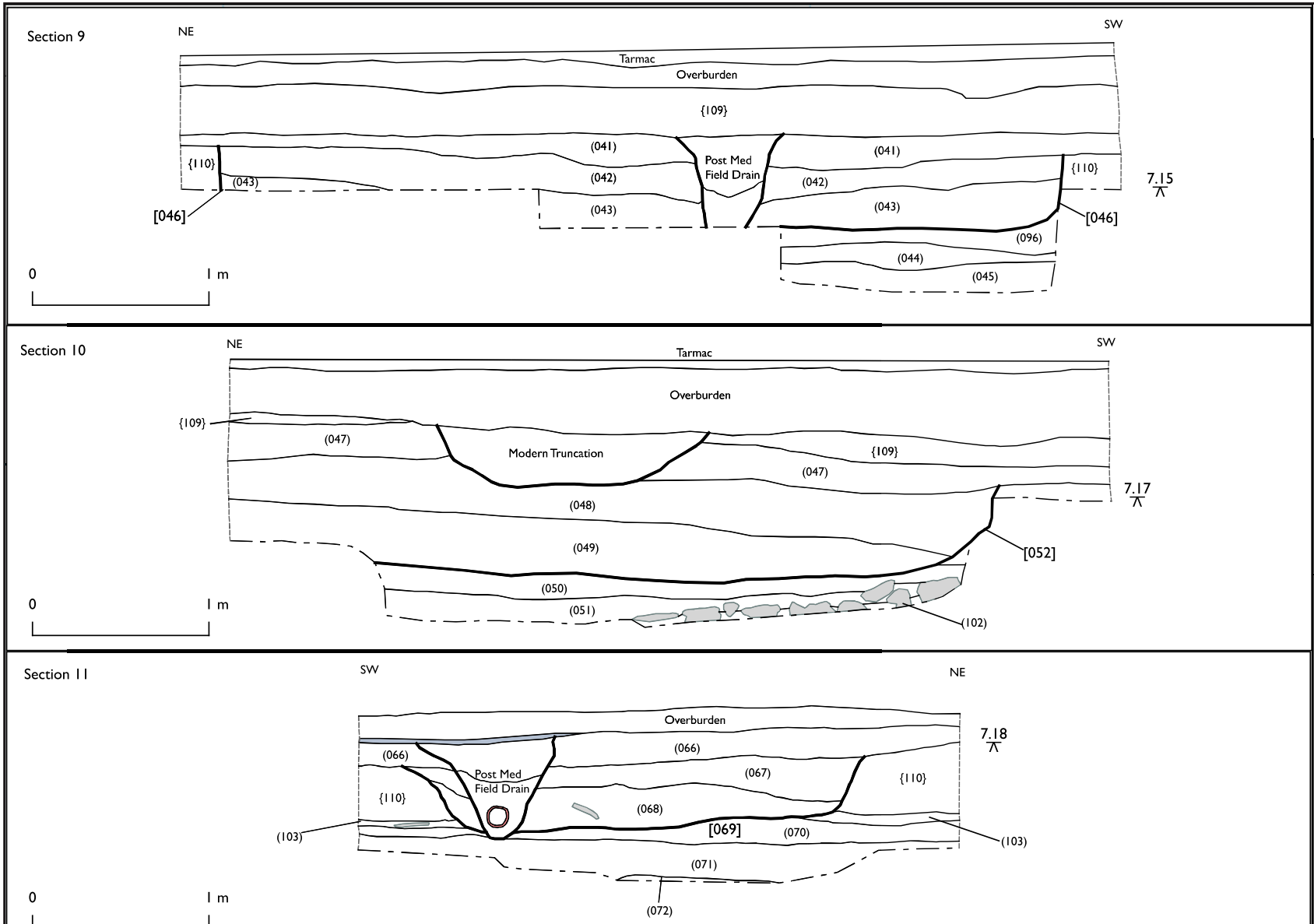

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Figure 5. Phases 1 & 2 Ditch Sections

Gordano School

Job: 11046 | 22-11-2017

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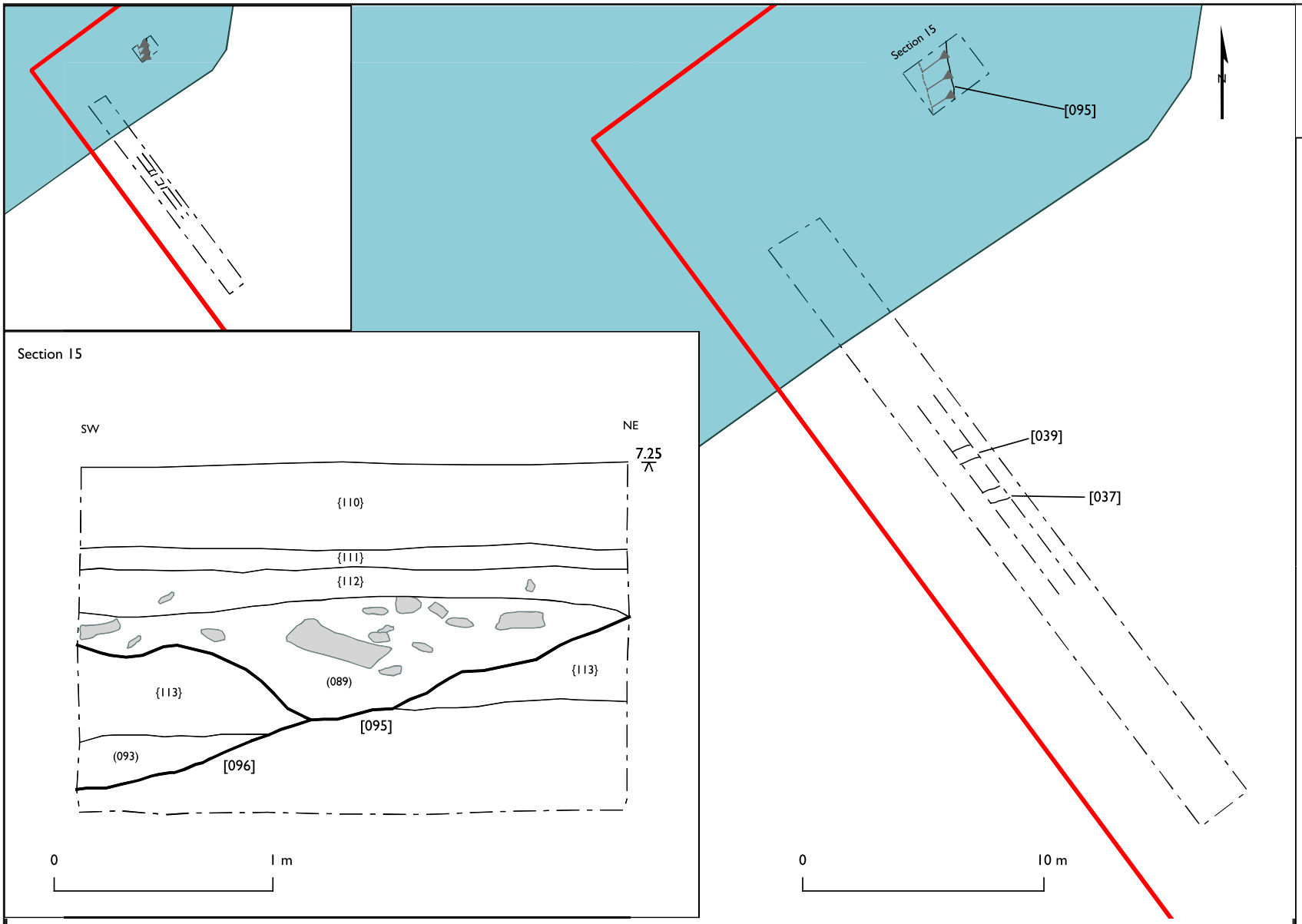

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Figure 6. Phase 1 Roman & Prehistoric Features

Gordano School

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