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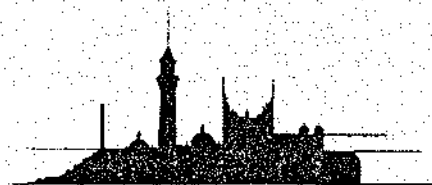
**FOSSE LANE, SHEPTON MALLET:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION**

**PROJECT 1990**

**Assessment and Post-Excavation  
Research Design**

**April 1991**

*B.U.F.A.U.*



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

Report No. 156

April 1991

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by

**P.J. Leach, J. Evans, and S.T.E. Buteux**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report is designed to provide an assessment of the results of a major programme of excavations undertaken at Shepton Mallet, Somerset, in 1990, together with proposals for further research and analysis for the purposes of interpretation and publication. It has been prepared according to guidelines set out by English Heritage in *The Management of Archaeology Projects* (1989).

The field project arose out of an initial site assessment by BUFAU, in February/March 1990, of land earmarked for development at Fosse Lane (Ferris & Leach 1990). It was quickly realised at that time that very extensive, substantial and well-preserved remains of a large Roman settlement beside the Fosse Way were threatened with destruction by the imminent development. Thanks to the generosity of the developer - Showerings Ltd. of Shepton Mallet - a funded programme of salvage recording and more detailed excavation was put in hand. This programme was subsequently modified as a consequence of changes in design specifications and the development construction programme, and of additional financial support from English Heritage, Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, and from Showerings themselves.

The excavations were essentially a 'Rescue' project, carried out at very short notice, as a consequence of which no detailed project design was formulated prior to the commencement of fieldwork. In the event, over three months of fieldwork was possible, its course and strategy evolving according to a progressive expansion of resources and time, and in response to changes in the development programme.

The report which follows comprises a site narrative summarising the circumstances of the project, methodology, results and the implications of the excavations (Section 2.0); an assessment of the paper archive and the value of the site's stratigraphic and structural record (Section 3.0); an assessment of the finds archive according to the principal material categories (Section 4.0); an assessment of dating evidence (Section 5.0); a post-excavation research design (Section 6.0); publication synopsis (Section 7.0); and a post-excavation programme (Section 8.0), accompanied by a provisional costing (Section 9.0).

## **2.0 SITE NARRATIVE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following account summarises the results of a 17-week excavation programme at Shepton Mallet in Somerset undertaken by BUFAU from the middle of May until the beginning of September 1990. The project arose as the outcome of discoveries made during the course of an evaluation commissioned in February of that year by Wayopen Estates Ltd. This was a requirement of a Section 52 agreement as part of a planning consent for industrial development at Fosse Lane, scheduled to begin later in the year (Ferris & Leach 1990). The evaluation by BUFAU was centred upon the site of a lead coffin, discovered and excavated in 1988 by a local metal detector user and the Somerset County Museum. As a result of the evaluation it became apparent that the lead coffin lay within a small cemetery of Roman date, itself part of a much more extensive Romano-British settlement, whose remains were likely to be substantially damaged or destroyed by the development.

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The remains first revealed in the Spring of 1990 lay in pasture fields alongside Fosse Lane, Charlton, an eastern suburb of Shepton Mallet, centring on NGR ST 630424 (Fig. 1). This lane, forming the western boundary, follows closely the former course of the Roman Fosse Way, descending from the Mendip Hills to the north. The site lies on land sloping gently towards the northeast, within a broad southern tributary valley of the River Sheppy. The land rises gently westwards to a plateau and southwards to the head of the valley; higher ground and steeper slopes dominate the valley to the north and east.

Beneath a relatively thin topsoil, the subsoil varies between weathered, horizontally-bedded lias limestone, and areas overlain by deposits of insoluble buff-red silty clay. The largest area evaluated revealed archaeological features and deposits occurring throughout at between 0.20m and 0.30m below the modern turf line (Fig. 2). In addition to further inhumation burials in rock-cut graves, the remains of stone-founded buildings, ditched and drystone-walled enclosures, pits, cobbled yards, and spreads of building and occupation debris, were encountered. Close to Fosse Lane, two smaller trenches revealed structural foundations and debris of Roman date, surviving to almost 1m in depth above the natural bedrock.

Arising from the evaluation, a series of proposals was devised, both to ameliorate the anticipated effects of development upon the demonstrated archaeological resource, and to extend our knowledge of it. In the event, further prospection, including geophysical survey, could not be applied in the short time available. Negotiations between BUFAU, Somerset County Council, Wayopen Estates and Showerings Ltd., who were to develop the site, resulted in a financial offer from the latter and assistance in kind from Wayopen Estates to permit archaeological excavation and recording to commence on the basis of Recommendation 3 of the evaluation report (Ferris & Leach 1990) and more detailed (though interim) proposals submitted by P. Leach (BUFAU) to Showerings Ltd. via Somerset County Council at the beginning of May 1990 (letter to R.A. Croft (SCC) 2/5/90).

In view of the urgency of a response and the initial offer of financial assistance from the developer, these documents represent the extent of the written research design for this project at that time. In essence, the response involved mechanical topsoil stripping under archaeological supervision of almost the entire area to be affected by the construction of a large warehouse and surrounding service areas (over 2ha); surface cleaning, definition and recording of archaeological contexts and finds recovered in this process, over at least 50% of the area; and the detailed excavation of sample areas selected on the basis of the range of archaeological feature and context types recognised throughout (Fig. 2).

Initially, the project was funded and timetabled for a six week season, within which time the scale, complexity and potential importance of the surviving archaeological remains soon became apparent. These factors influenced the timetable and specifications for the development, which, coupled with a substantial supplementary grant from English Heritage and the other sponsors, enabled the project to continue into the first week of September. Thanks to the support of the various sponsors and the co-operation of the principal site contractor - Ernest Ireland - the main objectives of the field project, outlined above and in previous documents, were largely achieved.

## 2.2 Methodology

The initial project objectives were determined by a six week timetable, an original financial provision of £15,000 from Showerings Ltd., the projected development layout, and the availability of the areas within the development zone. With these factors in mind, mechanical topsoil stripping commenced on May 14th 1990, plant and site accommodation being provided by Wayopen Estates.

At that time the design specifications involved the erection of a very large warehouse covering approximately 12,000 square metres, an access road to the south from Fosse Lane leading into an extensive concreted service area to the east and north of the warehouse, and a substantial

embankment between the site and Fosse Lane. To the north, the site was bounded by a disused railway embankment, subsequently heightened by landscaping (Fig. 3).

The provision of these facilities involved groundworks whose potential effect upon the archaeological resource varied across the site, but may be effectively defined in three zones:

- (i) Total destruction: downgrading of the site to the west involved destruction of a broad zone parallel with Fosse Lane but set back some 20m or more from it. This was to enable the warehouse building to be terraced into the natural slope of the land. Foundation trenches cut into bedrock for the warehouse also involved total destruction along the outer perimeters of the building.

Crossing the site diagonally and passing beneath Fosse Lane to the northwest is an infilled 19th-century railway cutting. Necessarily, this has already destroyed all archaeology within its course. The provision of services for the site required other more localised disturbances resulting in total archaeological loss. These included the access road to the south from Fosse Lane, mains gas, electricity and water pipeline trenches - mainly around the site perimeters - and provision for surface water drainage across and around the development site.

- (ii) Partial destruction or degradation: this was anticipated to arise from the soil stripping over areas mainly to the east of the terracing for the warehouse building, to be covered by the surrounding service areas. This zone was ultimately to be sealed by aggregate and concrete, but the necessary earthmoving operations would undoubtedly damage archaeological remains here.

- (iii) Protection: excepting the provision of mains services and the access road, a zone of 20m or more in width survives immediately alongside Fosse Lane, beneath a landscaped embankment, although in reality a broad segment has already been destroyed here by the railway cutting. In the southwest corner of the site one area remains undeveloped, although once again affected by the former railway cutting.

These circumstances suggested that the maximum archaeological effort should be expended in the zone of total destruction (i), excepting that portion already destroyed by the railway. In the event, contractor's vehicle movements and preliminary site works barred access to an area parallel with the zone proposed for landscaping, and to the site already being prepared for the Fosse Lane access road. Topsoil stripping was concentrated therefore upon a large area comprising parts of Zones i and ii, which included the greater part of the warehouse site and much of the proposed storage and forecourt surround, particularly to the north. This cleared area, which included within it the February/March evaluation site centred upon the original discovery of a lead coffin, eventually totalled some 2 hectares. Mechanical topsoil stripping under archaeological supervision was accomplished over approximately three weeks, using a 'hymac' excavator and lorries to remove up to 0.20m of the topsoil horizon.

At that stage the outlines of certain structural elements were already becoming apparent, and it was resolved to concentrate the efforts of the work force upon clearance by hand of remaining topsoil and other loosened subsoil, in the first instance working outwards from the area cleared and recorded in the earlier evaluation. Prior to this, and in the light of experience gained in the Spring, it was evident that recording strategies were required to (a) graphically record cleaned and defined surfaces and features as rapidly as possible, and (b) to recover and accurately locate the abundance of artefacts and other finds brought to light during that process.

- (a) Graphic recording. The exposure of extensive and relatively level cleaned horizons, within which spreads and settings of stone and other debris were abundant, suggested the widespread application of vertical photographic recording. This was achieved with the assistance of a camera mounted at a fixed height upon an aluminium quadrupod frame, kindly lent by Philip Barker and the Wroxeter Post-Excavation Project. A paper by Sidney Renow outlines the specifications and application of this particular recording technique (IFA, Technical Paper No.2, 1985).



At Fosse Lane the entire cleared first-level horizon of the site was recorded by this method using colour print film (Kodacolor 100), with the surveyed site grid as its basis. A second level of area vertical photographic recording was also achieved over certain parts of the site where subsequent excavation sampled particular areas more thoroughly (see below). Elsewhere, time and manpower restrictions excluded some localities from the overall first-level clearance process, and no vertical photographic recording was undertaken. These were principally the southeast, and northwest corners of the topsoil-stripped site, and a large area towards the centre of its northern half. A measured instrument survey drawing of the site, at a scale of 1:200, located the grid, the principal archaeological features and structures, and the site perimeters, providing a framework and reference for the detailed photographic record.

- (b) **Finds Recording.** The first-level cleaning process involved the removal of topsoil residues and loosened material above variable horizons of the clay or bedrock subsoil and the remains of archaeological deposits and features. In many instances, the top few centimetres of the latter were also removed during this process, in attempts to achieve a maximum definition of the archaeology. Finds recovered in this process, abundant in places, were collected and bagged at their find spot, some attempt being made to separate individual objects or small groups of the same material (eg pottery, nails, coins, etc.). Individual find numbers were allocated as the material was collected, and positions were logged three-dimensionally using a Sokkisha Set 3 'Total Station' electronic distance measurer. Although technically much of this material would be classified as unstratified, its accurate plotting by EDM permits a close association in many instances with defined, albeit unexcavated, archaeological contexts, on a site where displacement through recent ploughing or other sub-surface movement appears to be minimal. Ultimately a close correlation between finds distribution plots and the detailed first-level photographic record can be made, while the patterning of individual

finds categories from among the many thousands of numbered and located finds may be reconstructed and analysed.

In the first few weeks of site clearance and archaeological definition the scale and importance of the surviving remains quickly became apparent. This in turn prompted reviews of the development design specifications, timetabling for excavation opportunities, and eventually, supplementary funding from Showers and other sources to enable the field project to continue as long as practically possible in advance of the development programme. In consequence, the archaeological field programme and its objectives could be modified as appropriate. The first-level site definition and recording programme was timetabled to finish at the end of the original six week excavation period, by which time virtually all of the southern two thirds of the 2 hectare cleared area had been covered. Thereafter, a more selective sampling procedure was applied.

Having determined more precisely areas where total destruction or severe disturbance was unavoidable in the development scheme, efforts were concentrated upon the excavation of a representative sample of the major archaeological features or structural elements identified on the site, in particular where these coincided with a specific threat. It was also possible to schedule a programme of geophysical prospection at this stage, involving subsurface impulse radar and both magnetometer and resistivity surveys. These techniques were applied primarily to areas available immediately adjacent to the topsoil-stripped site, but still within the zone of development. The results obtained by geophysical prospection were uneven, ground conditions at the time of the surveys being less than ideal. However, some indications of archaeological phenomena were apparent (Fig. 2) (Geophysical Survey Report 90/9; Impulse Radar Report 0106/1/90).

Sampling procedures within the cleared area, for the remaining ten weeks or so of its availability for investigation, involved selective excavation of certain individual features and the more or less complete removal of some structures or portions thereof. In the southern part of the site efforts were concentrated on the total excavation and

removal of human remains; the excavation of particular features such as hearths/ovens, a well, and samples of ditches and drystone-wall boundaries; and the partial excavation of Roman building remains along the eastern perimeter of the site (Building I). In the event it became feasible to preserve most of this structure *in situ* beneath make-up for the service area forecourt to the new warehouse, although the excavation of certain upstanding portions was still required.

Further north, efforts were concentrated upon detailed excavation of two structures (Buildings VII and VIII) and their environs, to be severely affected by foundations for the warehouse. Towards the northern perimeter of the site two other Roman structures (Buildings IX and X) were cleared and recorded at the first-level horizon, along with extensive areas in their vicinity. The location of a mains drainage service trench here necessitated more detailed excavation along a transect which sectioned both buildings. Much of this area, including those parts of the identified Roman buildings not affected by deeper foundation or service trench excavation, was ultimately preserved and protected beneath a matting and sand cover laid beneath the make-up for the northern storage and service area around the warehouse.

The techniques of recovery and the recording of archaeological data employed for these detailed sampling excavations followed a more conventional procedure. The identification and recording of archaeological context and feature units was accomplished using BUFAU pro-forma recording sheets, with finds collected and recorded by context. This procedure was accompanied by photographic and scale graphic recording; the former involving both vertical (quadrupod) and oblique coverage, the latter by plans and sections - principally at a scale of 1:20.

## 2.3 Results: structures and sequences

### 2.3.1 Introduction

The following account attempts to summarise and interpret, in broad terms, the site morphology, with reference to specific excavated sequences (where obtained). At this stage of analysis no overall site phasing is possible, although certain trends are already apparent. Over much of the

site the finds themselves must play a key role in the relative dating of structures or phases, where little or no excavation was undertaken beyond the 'first-level' definition and recording. In these circumstances, progress in the site phasing should arise from spatial study and analysis of the archaeological phenomena at this horizon. In some areas, however, it may have to be accepted that no satisfactory identification or ordering of certain features or deposits will be possible. Necessarily, a more closely structured and chronologically precise account must await the detailed analysis of the finds and graphic data, using procedures proposed in Sections 4.0 and 6.0 of this report.

### 2.3.2 The Southern Enclosures

Within the topsoil-stripped area the clearest overall picture was obtained from the southern half of the site (Fig. 2.) Here, a series of enclosures had been defined, some by ditches and/or drystone walls, between which, two cobbled streets (A & C) crossed the site to merge as one (B) and continue eastwards. Within the enclosures evidence of a variety of activities and structures was identified. Areas of occupation soil and rubble, cobbles and stone settings, post holes, pits, a well, ovens and hearths, mark the sites of suspected timber-framed buildings associated with yards and ancillary structures of both industrial and domestic character.

At least three separate inhumation cemeteries were located, the largest of which included the burial in a lead coffin excavated in 1988. This last cemetery occupied an earlier, D-shaped, ditched enclosure, and comprised a series of mostly shallow rock-cut graves aligned generally east-west. Bone preservation was normally good, and iron nails indicate the former presence of wooden coffins. The most remarkable discovery among this group of burials was a silver amulet cross, decorated with an irregularly punched chi-rho symbol on the central roundel disc. This is one of the most positive identifications of a Christian burial so far in Roman Britain, and should on stylistic grounds be assigned to the 5th century. All of the burials, 18 in total, which could be located within this enclosure were excavated and removed. Their stratigraphic position relative to other features or deposits of

Romano-British date suggests that they are among the latest datable features on the site; a few also contained stray sherds of 4th-century pottery and coins of the same period. This cemetery can reasonably be interpreted as representing a small Christian community at Shepton, burying their dead towards the end of the 4th century, and probably in the first part of the 5th.

Two smaller groups of burials were aligned primarily north-south, and appear to represent pagan cemeteries associated with individual properties or family groups. One in particular (Pagan Cemetery 2), comprising six graves just to the north of the ?Christian cemetery, may belong with a large, rectangular stone-founded building (Building I). This cemetery was distinguished by the presence of a grave set within the foundations of a rectangular mausoleum, and containing a large stone coffin partially lined with lead sheet. Nearby, another large rock-cut grave contained a lead coffin with a wooden lid. A handful of inhumations around these burials, also in rock-cut graves, had been buried in nailed wooden coffins. Dating evidence for these graves was sparse, but a 4th-century date is likely.

The adjacent remains of Building I comprised two large ground-floor rooms and the remains of another smaller room, apparently attached at the south end. To the north, where preservation was better beneath a post-medieval field boundary, a small porch or veranda marked the main entrance. This building had superseded the alignment of a drystone boundary wall, proceeding eastwards alongside the cobbled street (B), into which the north-west corner of the building was cut. A late 3rd- or early 4th-century date for the origin of Building I is suggested.

Two later phases in the history of this structure are marked: the first by the insertion of a large oven into the largest room to the north and smaller hearths adjacent and in the porch/veranda area; and the second, by the demolition of Building I and reuse of its site for a timber-framed structure. Neither of these subsequent phases are yet well dated, but both could fall within the 4th century. The evidence for the timber-framed building of the latest phase comprised post-holes cut into the walls of Building I and the second phase hearths,

as well as areas of reused stone paving. The fragmentary remains of two human burials, orientated east-west, lay within the former middle room of Building I. The possibility of a link between this final phase of Building I (or its replacement) and the adjacent Christian cemetery to the west must be considered.

Further east, the semi-circular apse of another levelled building, partly overlain by later cobbling, abutted the east wall of Building I. A more extensive building complex is suspected to continue eastwards from here, indicated by geophysical survey results (Fig. 2 Area 2), previous metal detector finds, and subsequent observations made in the course of contractor's topsoiling as a preliminary to sealing the whole area beneath the warehouse service area (Fig. 3).

Debris and occupation deposits from this structural complex appear to spread westwards into the topsoil-stripped area of archaeological investigation, masking the southern edge of the ?Christian cemetery enclosure and the north side of others beyond it (Fig. 2). Between these southeastern enclosures and the cemetery, another street may have connected with Street A to the west. Several boundary walls and ditches were recorded here but their precise relationship and sequence were unclear. Away from the masking effect of occupation debris, the arrangement of enclosure boundaries is clearer to the southwest, and south of Street A. At least three enclosures were defined, wholly or in part, and a sequence can be discerned here, assisted by limited sample excavations. Evidence for the activities associated with these enclosures was, however, sparse.

A third group of nine excavated burials (Pagan Cemetery 1) was associated with part of another enclosure to the west, defined, apparently, by the triangle between the junction of Streets A and C, and by accompanying boundary ditches and/or drystone walls (Fig. 2). The scattered burials, in rock-cut graves, were with one exception orientated north-south, and in one or two instances accompanied by hobnail boots or subjected to ?post-mortem decapitation. The western half of this enclosure revealed a more complex sequence of features, including cobbled yards, traces of timber foundations, hearths or ovens, a well, and less coherent deposits of rubble and occupational

debris. Third- and 4th-century coins and pottery were abundant on the surfaces of these contexts, although 2nd- and even 1st-century finds were also present, in some instances derived from contexts apparently sealed by later structures. The graves appear to be among the latest features in this area. However, a clearer idea of the phasing should be recoverable from a closer examination of the datable finds and their distribution, and a more detailed interpretation of the vertical photographic record.

### 2.3.3. Northern Structures and Enclosures

Overall, the northern half of the site was less thoroughly investigated, although more detailed excavations were targetted upon the remains of stone-founded buildings likely to be affected by the development (Fig. 3). This factor, along with extensive spreads of masking occupation debris found generally in this area, and its availability for overall cleaning and definition slightly later in the initial salvage recording programme, accounts for a less extensive first-level clearance.

Several sets of drystone boundary walls and ditches were traced here, with a predominant east-west alignment. Some of these were probably property divisions relating to the Fosse Way frontage, and in some instances were laid out in the early phases of the settlement's development. At least one cobbled street (D) was traced following these alignments, and several areas representing enclosure layouts, occupation and structural debris associated with evidence of industrial features, yards and the remains of less substantial buildings, were recorded. One of these, immediately to the north of Street B, was partly exposed and appeared to mirror closely the arrangements and character of the features recorded in the adjacent enclosure to the south (2.3.2. above). Of particular note here was the discovery of an inscribed lead ingot, found adjacent to one of a group of small hearths or ovens. This enclosure, and its neighbour to the south, are potentially the rear of properties which had the Fosse Way as their frontage, where more substantial buildings may have stood.

To the northeast, one group of substantial stone-founded buildings (VII, VIII, IX, & X) was exposed and partially excavated. Portions of these buildings were to be destroyed in foundation

and service-trench excavations relating to the development, and thus required some prior archaeological investigation (Fig. 2).

Two structures - Buildings VII and VIII - were almost completely excavated, and between them provided a valuable chronological sequence as well as a sample of the range of activities and events represented in the settlement as a whole. The foundations and lowest levels of Building VII survived relatively well beneath rubble and occupation debris deriving from its eventual destruction. This rectangular building, with well-laid pitched wall foundations supporting dressed, mortared lower wall courses, was erected sometime in the later 2nd century. It succeeded an earlier linear drystone enclosure boundary, and some evidence for contemporary occupation of late 1st- or 2nd-century date. Later modifications to Building VII involved partitioning at the south end, and thus the creation of a three-roomed structure at ground level. One of these later rooms may have been a kitchen, with a smaller store room alongside. A less substantial veranda or corridor was also added along the west side, and possibly also to the south, up against another east-west boundary wall along the south side of the property here. The end of Building VII was dramatic, a fire having destroyed at least the two end rooms, within which were preserved the charred lower door frames and sills, melted lead, and several smashed pottery storage vessels.

This destruction, and consequent demolition, probably occurred some time during the 3rd century. Thereafter, a large east-west drainage ditch was dug across the whole site, removing the northern end of the now redundant building remains in the process. Building VIII to the northeast continued the story into the 4th century, following silting and virtual obliteration of the 3rd-century ditch. This almost square building, with pitched footings and mortared lower wall courses, was set over the infilled ditch and contained a large oven or kiln with a surrounding working area. Its single room may have been open to the south, no foundations being detected here.

Additional hearths or smaller ovens were sited just outside Building VIII to the south. There

was some evidence here, in the form of post holes, for a late ?timber successor to the building. Coins and pottery suggested use of the structure, its environs and its ?successor, well into the later 4th century, if not beyond.

Further north, two more substantial buildings were encountered but less extensively excavated (Fig. 2). The largest (Building IX), to the west, was fully revealed in plan in first-level clearance as an aisled hall or enclosed courtyard, with a suite of rooms to the south and an entrance hall or annexe to the north. Only this last room was excavated, in advance of its partial destruction by a service trench. From this a 3rd-century origin for the building is suspected, but with occupation continuing well into the 4th century. In a late phase of use an oven or kiln had been inserted into the west end of the northern room. Although the remainder of the building was not excavated and is now preserved, along with Building X, beneath a protective cover of matting and sand, it is clear from the first-level plan that the building as a whole underwent several modifications during its life. The most southerly room, possibly with a projecting side porch or annex, is certainly a later addition, while a wide blocked entrance fronted by a drain can be seen in the east wall of the hall or courtyard. Post pads within this, the largest space, allow either alternative reconstruction in the absence of further excavation, although these features appear to be relatively late in the structural sequence. No original floor levels were apparent, although one of the southern rooms seems to have had walls decorated with painted plaster. There are also some signs of a late timber-framed successor, but the overall plan is unclear.

To the east of Building IX, a less substantially built, rectangular structure with rounded corners (Building X) may have been built in the later 2nd century. It was subsequently overlain by cobbled and paved surfaces - perhaps contemporary with Building IX, adjacent. Deposits of burnt grain within were sampled from the northern end of the building. Although its northern extremity evidently lay beneath the 19th-century railway embankment, from the surviving plan it may be suggested that this building functioned as a large barn or store. As for Building IX, except for the linear strip excavated through it to the north (in

advance of a main drainage trench), knowledge of Building X, its function and sequence, can only be gained from the first-level clearance and recording.

### 2.3.4 Prehistoric Settlement

The archaeological remains uncovered and excavated at Fosse Lane are identifiable almost exclusively as of Romano-British type. Excepting a few sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery, there is nothing in the archaeological record signifying activity on the site between the 5th and the 18th centuries. Some remains of much earlier periods can however be identified, principally among the finds assemblages. The recovery of several hundred pieces of worked flint, widely distributed across the excavation site, including implements of late Neolithic and early Bronze Age type, suggests the possibility of contemporary occupation here. A few potential early prehistoric features of ditch and post-hole type were identified in the vicinity of the Romano-British 'Christian' cemetery, but no adequate systematic excavation was possible. There is even more uncertainty concerning the possibility of an Iron Age forerunner to the Roman settlement. Pottery and structural remains have been identified on adjacent sites at Fosse Lane, but not apparently in this locality. Detailed analysis of the pottery, and perhaps certain other artefacts, may yet contradict this impression.

### 2.4 Discussion

From the evidence already gathered it is clear that a substantial sample has been obtained from the core area of an important new Romano-British 'small town'. Although a roadside settlement was previously suspected here at Shepton Mallet (Smith 1987, 298), its existence and character has for the first time been proven and extensively demonstrated. By its very nature and circumstances, the field project of 1990 lacked the benefits of forward strategic planning. Nevertheless, it was soon apparent that much could still be gained through the application of appropriate strategies to the problems faced. In essence, and despite its shortcomings, the 1990 excavation programme obtained one of the most extensive archaeologically excavated samples of a roadside 'small town' in Roman Britain (cf Burnham and Wachter 1990).

Concurrent with, and subsequent to, the excavation programme of 1990, a continuing series of evaluations, by means of geophysical survey and trial trenching, frequently in tandem, has been undertaken in the locality of this settlement. From these assessments it is now clear that the Roman settlement may originally have covered 30 hectares or more along either side of the Fosse Way. The pattern emerging is a relatively familiar one for settlements of this type, albeit unique in this particular manifestation, comprising an irregular scatter of buildings, enclosures, cemeteries, side streets and various industrial, agricultural or domestic features, extending back for 300m or more in some places from the Fosse Way (Fig. 4). The 1990 excavation site appears to have obtained a very extensive and characteristic sample of the whole except in one important respect, namely the main road frontage. Some small-scale sampling has in fact demonstrated the presence of buildings and other structures here, but little of their arrangement or origins.

The origin of Roman Shepton Mallet is in fact one of the questions least capable of a satisfactory answer from the results of this excavation, and the virtual lack of an excavated sequence from the the road frontage must be primarily to blame. The discovery of pottery kilns some 2km to the west in the 19th century is relatively well known (Scarth 1886), the products dating stylistically from the later 1st or early 2nd century. This discovery, due to its location near the modern town centre, seems to have little direct link with the settlement which developed subsequently at Fosse Lane, although a military connection might be suspected with the pottery manufacture. Roman Shepton Mallet, beside the Fosse Way, lies roughly midway between the major contemporary centres of Bath and Ilchester, both with early military connections. As to whether a fort was sited close to Shepton Mallet and, if so, influenced the subsequent development of the civilian settlement, little more can presently be surmised.

From the evidence currently available, the settlement appears to have coalesced sometime early in the 2nd century as a commercial and service centre, possibly with some political and

administrative functions, serving a relatively prosperous, Romanised local community. Evidence of pre-Roman Iron Age settlement was not recorded on the main excavation site, but is now known from several adjacent site evaluations, as well as from the wider hinterland. By the early 4th century the Roman settlement was evidently a flourishing, undefended roadside town, exceeding in area both Camerton and Charterhouse, the two other reliably authenticated 'small towns' of Somerset. Already, from the evidence recovered at Shepton Mallet, a changing pattern of activities and occupation on this site can be documented, probably continuously from the early 2nd century through to the end of the 4th century, and quite probably into the 5th. By this time, among the community still in occupation, there were evidently some Christian elements. From this time onwards the fate of the settlement is obscure, although probably little different from that of the other urban communities of late and post-Roman Britain. No occupation of the site can be demonstrated after the 5th century, although it is perhaps significant that Shepton Mallet's medieval parish boundary crosses the Fosse Way at this point to enclose the site and immediate environs of the former Roman town.

### 3.0 ASSESSMENT OF PAPER ARCHIVE AND STRATIGRAPHIC AND STRUCTURAL VALUE OF THE SITE

#### 3.1 The Paper Archive

The Fosse Lane site archive comprises material created in the course of both the initial evaluation of February/March and the main summer season of excavation. The archive consists of files containing standard BUFUA pro-forma feature and context recording sheets, both for the evaluation and for areas subject to detailed excavation during the main excavation season; (pencil) field drawings on drawing film; filed and indexed sets of colour slide, black and white and colour print photographs, including the extensive vertical colour print record of 70% of the site; field survey records relating to the EDM plotted finds distribution and site geometry; and an archive of primary finds record sheets relating to the plotted finds, finds from contexts, and



burials. This material may be quantified as follows:

Features:	230	(8 files, including supplementary notes,
Contexts:	383	sketches, etc.)
Field Drawings:	52	(plans and sections)
Photographs:	(x36 exposure films, filed with record sheets per film).	
Colour print: vertical quadrupod cover,	118 films,	
	38 index sheets	
Colour print:	general record	10 films
Colour slide:	general record	33 films
Black & white:	general record	36 films
EDM finds plots: (3 files)		5,560 plots
EDM survey site geometry: (1 file)		1,091 readings, 18 diagrams
Primary finds record sheets		
finds plot:	(3 files)	5,560 entries
contexts:	(1 file)	341 entries
burials	(1 file)	32 records
samples	(1 file)	13 records

### 3.2 Stratigraphic and structural value of the site

The 2 hectare area subjected to excavation and recording at Fosse Lane was a sample area within a much more extensive Romano-British roadside settlement. In no direction were the limits to these remains reached, although the location of this site in the context of the whole is fairly well established. From the evidence recovered here, and in the subsequent evaluations in the locality, it is apparent that the 1990 excavation site sampled an area (perhaps up to 7% of the whole) close to the most densely occupied core of the settlement as it developed east of the Fosse Way (Fig. 4). This road was evidently the prime focus for buildings and properties, although the eastern road frontage here was not available for examination. The very considerable area recorded to the rear did, however, contain several more localised foci of structural and boundary elements, including at least three separate groups of substantial stone-founded buildings.

The size of the area available for examination could not be matched by an equivalent extent of detailed excavation. However, the definition and recording of structures, features and deposits

at the 'first level' below the topsoil cover, coupled with the recovery of a large and accurately plotted artefact assemblage, over almost the entire 2 hectare area, in itself represents a data base of considerable value. On the basis of this information it was possible to devise a sampling strategy to investigate representative examples of all the main perceived archaeological phenomena on the site, and thus complement and give extra dimension to the extensive area recording programme. A relatively shallow depth of deposits and low-level stratigraphic complexity over large areas of the site, maximised the opportunity to gain a widespread appreciation of its general layout. More detailed stratigraphic excavation in sample areas, notably in and around Buildings VII and VIII, provided stratigraphic sequences and chronological frameworks which may be extrapolated more generally across the site.

Archaeological features and deposits at the Fosse Lane site lie, for the most part, very close to the modern surface, and often to no great depth above a natural horizon of clay or limestone bedrock. These remains are to some extent truncated, notably those of formerly upstanding structures, which normally survive only at ground floor or foundation level. Only the southern half of the site has been regularly ploughed in living memory, and its truncating effects were most evident here. Structural remains and associated deposits showed less sign of disturbance to the north. To some extent the contrasts in land use are reflected in the differential visibility of the archaeological remains to the north and south, although the greater masking effect of surviving deposits over structures and other features to the north is partly a reflection of the greater intensity of occupation and activity here.

No part of the Fosse Way frontage was subjected to extensive excavation, and the layout of buildings and properties here remains unknown. However, very limited evaluation in February/March 1990 demonstrated complex stratigraphy surviving to a depth of around one metre.

Despite the relatively small and localised areas of the site which were excavated in some detail, the size of the area cleaned and recorded overall

to a 'first-level' definition was such as to obtain one of the most extensive pictures so far of the character and layout of a Romano-British roadside settlement of this type. The information recorded, supplemented by the very substantial assemblage of plotted and associated finds, as well as the detailed excavation sample, provides a data base of considerable potential. Justification for a post-excavation analysis of the data from this site is outlined in Section 6; its basis can be summarised as follows:

- i) Sample size
- ii) Recording levels - extensive vertical photographic coverage; single context and finds recording; extensive 3-dimensional finds distribution plotting; integration of recording methodologies (2.2)
- iii) Availability of wide-ranging, stratigraphically excavated and recorded control samples (2.2 and 3.2, above)
- iv) Quality and range of in-context finds (4.1 - 4.13)
- v) Quality, extent and range of structures (2.3)
- vi) Opportunities and potential for wider research objectives (6.1 - 6.2)
- vii) Local context of continuing excavation on the larger common archaeological resource and adjacent sites.

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

### 4.1 Introduction

The recovery of a large and generally well-preserved assemblage of artefacts from Fosse Lane, together with a smaller but still significant range of environmental data, represents a resource of considerable potential for further analysis and study (Table 1). The method of collection and recording used in the field greatly enhances the intrinsic value of the material itself, providing opportunities for distributional studies to enhance understanding of the functions and chronology of structures and activity areas (Section 6.0, below).

Conditions for the preservation of most surviving material categories - eg pottery, metalwork and bone - were on the whole good, although no environments preserving the more vulnerable classes of organic remains were encountered. The size and range of the larger material assemblages, notably pottery and metalwork (including coins), make them eminently suitable for both intra-site analysis and comparative study relative to contemporary settlements of the same class in Roman Britain, together with analysis of the site's economic and cultural relationships with its hinterland and its position in the broader regional context of South West England. The following sections provide quantified assessments of the principal material categories and the requirements for their analysis and publication. A further assessment of the research potential of the assemblage as a whole, and a suggested programme of work is provided in Sections 6.0 and 8.0, below.



Table 1: Quantification of Finds and Environmental Data

Material	Finds Category	By Box	Quantification by Count	By Weight
Flint	Implements	-	79 items	-
	Waste	-	314 items	-
Romano- British Pottery	Amphorae	7/8*	*1540	-
	Mortaria	1*	* 100	-
	Samian	1*	* 560	-
	Miscellaneous wares	23/24	21350	-
	Total number of boxes	33	-	-
Fired Clay	Brick & Tile	-	8 fragments	-
	Spindle whorls	-	5 items	-
	Miscellaneous	-	-	2.0kg
Metalwork	Coins	-	1,001 items	-
	Brooches	-	46 items	-
	Cu-objects	-	181 items	-
	Iron nails	-	1944 items	-
			(based on head count)	
	Iron objects (excluding nails)	-	486	-
	Lead objects	-	64	-
	Lead scraps	-	-	15.5kg
	Silver	-	3	-
	Pewter	-	1	-
Metalworking residues	-	-	50.6kg	
Glass	Vessel	-	173 fragments	-
	Window	-	31 fragments	-
	Objects	-	30 items	-
Stone	Building	-	114 fragments	-
	Implements	-	28 items	-
	Mortar and wall plaster	-	13 samples (inc. 2 painted plaster frags.)	2.0kg
Ecofacts	Animal bone	11	-	-
	Human bone	-	34 skeletons	-
	Shell	-	70 fragments	-
	Charcoal/Wood	-	10 samples	-

\*Based on assessment of a 25% sample.

#### 4.2 Worked flint (Lynne Bevan)

The flint assemblage comprised 304 flakes, 30 blades, 10 cores, and 49 tools: 10 arrowheads, 2 axe butts, 1 awl and 36 scrapers. The assemblage is both impressive in its size and interesting in its chronological and stylistic variety. Although the majority of flakes and artefacts were collected as surface spot-finds and no prehistoric features could be positively identified among the remains of the Romano-British settlement, the high recovery rate and survival of many chronologically diagnostic pieces means that certain inferences can be drawn from the study of this useful collection.

#### 4.3 Roman pottery

The assemblage comprises a total of 33 boxes of pottery, from which a sample of 9 boxes of pottery was assessed, 7 from excavated contexts and 2 from the spot-find groups. The aim was to assess the date and quality of the assemblage, and produce an estimate of the quantity present. It is estimated that the total assemblage represents somewhere in the region of 23000 sherds.

##### Samian

Assessment of 7 boxes produced 140 sherds of samian of which 117 were plain, 20 decorated, and 3 stamped. Based on these figures it is estimated that 28 boxes might produce somewhere in the region of 560 sherds, of which perhaps about 70-80 might be decorated and 10-15 stamped. More accurate quantification will not be possible until initial sorting has been completed. All of the samian will require detailed analysis by fabric, form and decoration, and inclusion on the pottery database. The assemblage has been discussed with Brenda Dickinson who has agreed to undertake the analysis and production of a report for publication (as agreed with K. Barclay).

##### Mortaria

Assessment of 7 boxes produced only 23 sherds of mortaria, none of which was stamped. It is estimated that 28 boxes might produce somewhere in the region of 90-100 sherds. All this material will require detailed analysis by fabric and form, and inclusion on the pottery database. As Kay Hartley is unable to undertake any reports at present, this will be undertaken by

Jane Evans in consultation with an external specialist (to be decided). Any stamps will need to be studied by Kay Hartley for inclusion in her corpus (as discussed with Rob Perrin). It is not expected that many will be present, however, as the assemblage dates mainly to the late 3rd and 4th centuries.

##### Amphorae

1036 sherds of amphora were boxed separately (5 boxes). In addition relatively small quantities were still mixed in with the other pottery, 7 boxes producing a further 126 sherds. The estimated total number of amphora sherds present is therefore 1540 (7/8 boxes). All this material will require detailed analysis by fabric and form, and inclusion on the pottery database. The assemblage has been discussed with David Williams, who has agreed to undertake the analysis and produce a report.

##### Coarse wares and miscellaneous fine wares

It is estimated that the remainder of the assemblage comprises somewhere in the region of 21000 sherds. The earliest material represented in the sample of pottery studied dated to the late 1st or early 2nd century. Early Roman pottery represented included Savernake ware and Shepton Mallet ware, the latter producing early Severn Valley ware tankards. These wares occurred in a number of assemblages where Black-burnished ware (BB1) was absent. BB1 was very common in most of the assemblages assessed, and its absence in these assemblages may indicate a pre c.120 date, this being the date at which BB1 is thought to have become more widely distributed. The range of BB1 forms present indicates some level of activity throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries and into the 4th. The majority of the pottery, however, dated to the late 3rd or 4th centuries. During this time BB1 and local grey wares were the most common fabrics, although the New Forest, Oxford and Alice Holt industries are also represented.

In assessing the potential of the assemblage for further analysis, its site-specific value will be considered first. The pottery will be studied with close reference to other artefact types present. Firstly, it will provide the main dating evidence for the excavated strata, which it is hoped will

provide a reference point for the surface recorded pottery. Secondly it will be a major factor in determining the function and status of the various structures, and thus the character of the site as a whole. A brief assessment of the assemblages from excavated contexts in Buildings VII and VIII, for example, suggested that they were quite distinct. Of particular interest would be the earliest and latest Roman material, which could contribute towards our understanding of the site's character in these periods of transition. Thirdly, it will provide valuable information regarding site formation processes and patterns of rubbish disposal across the site. This, in turn, might highlight property boundaries not evident from the structural remains. The potential to study all these aspects of the site story is of course enormously enhanced by the opportunity to plot the spatial distribution of the pottery using AutoCAD (as discussed in detail in Section 6.0, below).

Next the potential value of the assemblage may be considered in its regional context. Fulford and Huddleston (1991, 14) note:

"We seem to be getting little nearer the aim behind all this analysis, that is to produce an overview of economic relations within and between towns, regions and eventually within all of Roman Britain throughout the Roman period."

One of the main obstacles preventing this would seem to be the paucity of quantitatively-based reporting which pays attention to form and fabric/ware, which Fulford and Huddleston recommend should be "a fundamental precondition for new work" (*ibid*, 27).

Detailed analysis and quantification of the Fosse Lane assemblage would thus add valuable data to the regional database. Shepton Mallet is situated on the Fosse Way roughly equidistant from the major centres of Ilchester to the south and Bath to the north. With Bath, it lies roughly at the interface of the BB1 dominated South West and Gloucestershire, with its preponderance of Severn Valley wares (as described by Fulford and Huddleston 1991, 30). The fabrics and forms could fruitfully be compared with those from Ilchester (Leach 1982; Leach 1991; Edwards 1988) and Bath (Cunliffe and Davenport 1985;

Cunliffe 1988), for which a fabric/form series is currently in production, and could thus provide a valuable link between these two important regions. Comparison could also usefully be made with the unpublished assemblage from Henley Wood and published assemblages such as Cheddar (Hirst & Rahtz 1973), Chew Valley (Rahtz & Greenfield 1977) Gatcombe (Brannigan 1977), Camerton (Wedlake 1958), Charterhouse (Burnham and Wachter 1990), Sea Mills (Ellis 1987), Bradley Hill (Leech 1981), Lamyatt Beacon (Leech 1986) and Catsgore (Leech 1982), and with material from the kilns at Shepton Mallet (Scarth 1866) and Congresbury (Usher and Lilley 1964). It is hoped that Jane Evans' familiarity with assemblages from the mid to northern Severn Valley (Evans forthcoming a, Evans forthcoming b), combined with Peter Leach's familiarity with assemblages from the southern Severn Valley, will also maximise the contribution analysis of this assemblage can make to the study of Severn Valley wares generally.

Finally the assemblage may be considered in its national context. The critical need to study site formation processes has been highlighted in a recent report for English Heritage (Fulford and Huddleston 1991): the spatial plotting of the substantial assemblage from Fosse Lane, when analysed and manipulated using a computerised database linked to AutoCAD (following procedures outlined in Section 6.0), has the potential to make an important contribution here.

#### **Appendix: Procedures for the analysis of the Roman pottery**

##### **1. Petrological analysis**

It is unlikely that petrological analysis would be productive for the local sandy wares or Severn Valley wares. However, the assemblage has been discussed with David Williams who has agreed to undertake any petrological analysis required to answer specific questions that arise during study of the pottery.

##### **2. Fabric and Form Sorting**

Prior to fabric sorting the analyst will need to become familiar with the Ilchester fabric series. The pottery will be sorted by context and analysed by structure, using the BUFAU

pottery recording system. The pottery from stratified contexts will be studied working from the earliest to the latest levels. Throughout processing there will need to be close collaboration with other members of the project team, both internal and external. Sherds will initially be sorted and bagged by fabric only, recording spot dates so that dating evidence is available to other team members at the earliest possible stage. Information relating to the quality and function of specific context and plot assemblages will need to be recorded at this stage as the pottery will subsequently be studied by fabric.

The pottery will be laid out by fabric and rims selected for illustration as the basis for a form type series. Cross-context joins will be noted at this stage and a vessel number allocated for each vessel represented. The following information will then be recorded on pottery record sheets by context/plot:

- 1A Fabric - Sherds will be allocated fabric numbers based on the Ilchester fabric series and name codes relating to the BUFAU internal series.
- 1B Form/Decoration - Each fabric group within a context will be divided into decorated and undecorated body sherds, rims, handles and bases. Each category will be recorded using a specific form number or code. In addition, the form type/name will be recorded, for example 'jar', 'dish' or, if necessary, 'uncertain'.
- 1C Quantity - To maximise the potential for comparison with other assemblages the pottery will be quantified by sherd count and weight, noting the diameter and the percentage extant for both rims and bases so that estimated vessel equivalents (EVEs) can be recorded.
- 1D Cross stick - The vessel number allocated to any cross-context joins will be recorded.
- 1E Abrasion - The presence of abrasion will be recorded
- 1F Comments - Any additional information relating to manufacture (for example the

presence of manufacturers' stamps), use or re-use (for example sooting patterns, wear-marks, repair, graffiti and residues), or post-depositional history will be noted.

### 3. Data Entry

The information recorded on the Pottery Analysis sheets will be entered onto the computer database and will need to be carefully checked and edited prior to data retrieval.

### 4. Specialist Reports

External pottery specialists will be asked to record pottery in the method described above. Like all external specialists they will be advised of the project's research aims and timetable, be asked to provide information relating to the site's chronology, function and status, and be asked to compare the assemblages studied with others from the region, in particular Ilchester and Bath.

### 5. Illustration

A form series, by fabric, will be produced for archive during processing. From this a number of sherds will be selected for publication (see Section 7.2 below)

### 6. Production of the Research Archive

The archive will consist of:

- 6A Pottery Analysis sheets arranged in context order
- 6B A computer print-out of the entire database together with lists by database field
- 6C Quantification of the assemblage by fabric, form, decoration, structure, phase (if applicable), etc.
- 6D Fabric descriptions, to include information on manufacture, vessel types and function, source, external distribution and dating, and distribution and dating within the sites
- 6E The form series, as described above
- 6F Reports of any petrological analysis that has been undertaken
- 6G Copies of all relevant AutoCAD plots

#### 4.4 Metal objects and metalworking residues

##### Coins (Simon Esmonde Cleary)

1,001 coins were recovered from the 1990 excavations at Shepton Mallet. A preliminary inspection suggests that they are almost all of copper alloy and the great majority are of later 3rd- and 4th-century date.

A number of the coins come from stratified contexts and will thus be of use in the dating of deposits/phases/areas.

The principal interest of the assemblage lies in its size. It is sufficiently large to be useable for statistical analysis. It is one of the largest groups from the Somerset/Avon region and its analysis and comparison with coin-lists from other sites in the region holds great potential for illuminating the function of the site and its place within the socio-economic settlement hierarchy, particularly in the later Roman period.

Full identification will be necessary together with quantification and tabulation for publication.

##### Brooches (Iain Ferris)

A total of 46 whole or part brooches was recovered, 40 of copper alloy and 6 of iron. The majority of these are bow brooches, with no plate brooches and only one penannular brooch present in the assemblage. The brooches are to be studied by Don Mackreth and will add to his, at the moment small, corpus of material from the South West. It is estimated that all 30 complete brooches will require illustration for publication.

##### Copper alloy objects (Lynne Bevan and Iain Ferris)

For the purposes of assessment the 181 objects were divided into the two categories below. The assemblage has not yet been assessed by a conservator but it is felt that only minimal cleaning - brushing with a glass fibre brush - will be necessary prior to analysis:

**Category A** - Artefacts requiring cataloguing for archive, entry onto the database and a brief summary in the published report. This category comprised assorted lumps (24), sheet fragments (13), strips (22), tubes (3), and wire (15). None of this material requires illustration.

**Category B** - Artefacts requiring more detailed analysis and publication. The majority of these comprised personalia such as bracelet fragments (14), rings/earrings (10), the brooches discussed separately above, hairpins and pin fragments (26) and toilet instruments (16). The remainder of the assemblage comprised studs/nails (11), fittings and mounts (11) and miscellaneous objects (16). Of these, 54 will require illustration for publication.

##### Iron objects (Lynne Bevan and Iain Ferris)

An estimated 1,944 nails, based on nail-head count, and 46 cleats were recovered. The establishment of a nail type series is recommended, followed by quantification by type and illustration of each type for publication. In addition, 486 objects were assessed, 122 of which were unidentifiable. The majority of these will require X-ray, and some may require cleaning prior to analysis. Identifiable objects fell into the following categories:

**Tools** - The character of the assemblage was primarily agricultural, although tools associated with manufacturing processes such as metal and leather working were also present. Agricultural tools included a plough-share fragment, two ox-goats, a falx, an incomplete reaping hook and a saw blade. Industrial tools comprised a gouge, 10 punches, 7 awls, 3 chisels and a spatulate tool.

**Knives/blades** - An impressive quantity and variety of knives/blades were present: 9 complete knives/blades, 29 blade fragments, a razor and four cleavers were noted, the majority being well preserved.

**Locks and keys** - Fragments of 4 keys, 2 latches and 2 latch-lifters were recovered.

**Ferrules** - 3 ferrules were recovered.

**Fixtures and fittings** - 127 objects including 2 lengths of chain, 2 pieces of coiled wire, several pieces of door furniture, 7 hooks, 23 links and rings, a bucket handle, 2 'T' clamps, 1 loop-headed spike and 2 lynch-pins.

**Personalia** - As well as the 6 brooches included above, this category comprised 13 complete and fragmentary styli, 2 complete pins and 5 pin fragments, 2 incomplete finger rings and 2 buckles.

The ironwork constitutes an interesting assemblage which, in part because of the information available about the spatial distribution of the objects across the site, will repay detailed consideration. The opportunity to identify possible activity areas, and the future extension of such studies to other areas of the settlement has great potential. Parallels will be sought in the standard catalogues (Manning 1976, Manning 1985, Rees 1979, White 1967), while the overall make-up of the assemblage will be assessed against those from local sites such as Camerton, Catsgore and Ilchester. A total of 70 identifiable objects will require illustration.

#### Lead, silver and pewter objects (Lynne Bevan and Iain Ferris)

64 lead objects and 15.5 kg of lead scraps were recovered. The objects included 2 coffins, a stamped lead ingot from the Mendip mines, 2 spindle whorls, 2 weights, 1 plumb-bob, 15 pot rivets or strips, 15 sheet fragments and 6 offcuts. 3 silver objects were retrieved; a spoon, an as yet unidentified object, and a disc-shaped amulet crudely punched with a Chi Rho symbol. The latter was the most interesting of these, and possibly the most important single find from the site. It was found on the floor of a grave thought to date to the early 5th century and the man buried with it is perhaps the most positively-identified Christian to have been found in a Romano-British cemetery. Only 1 pewter object, a small plate, was found.

Only the silver and pewter objects require illustration, along with 5 lead objects, including the two coffins.

#### Smithing slag and hearth-bottom, etc.

About 50.6 kg of slag was recovered. All this material needs examination, quantification by type and reporting.

#### 4.5 Glass (Lynne Bevan and Iain Ferris)

The glass assemblage comprised 173 fragments of vessel glass, 12 of which were post-medieval; 31 fragments of window glass; 26 beads, 17 complete and 9 fragmentary; 2 finger rings and 2 gaming counters. The vessel glass dated mainly to the 3rd and 4th centuries, although some earlier material may be present, and a high

proportion of fine wares was noted. Vessels represented were beakers (77), flasks (7), bottles (62), and bowls (15). Until the assemblage is assessed later in the year by Jennifer Price it will not be possible to estimate accurately the number of fragments requiring illustration, although up to 25 fragments have been costed into the illustrators time. For the purposes of assessment the beads were divided into the following two categories:

**Category A** - More common types for which quantification, entry on database and a summary in the published report are required (18 beads).

**Category B** - More unusual beads for which more detailed discussion and illustration for publication are required (8 beads).

#### 4.6 Worked stone (Fiona Roe)

Excluding the stone coffin, which has not yet been seen, there are 143 items of worked stone, of which 28 are objects and 114 building stone. 16 different varieties of stone are represented. The preservation of the assemblage is above average, and a number of complete items are present. The objects comprise 1 complete lower stone of a rotary quern and 5 quern fragments, a complete slate whetstone and 13 incomplete whetstones, 2 stone balls, 1 gaming piece, 1 altar fragment, 2 mortars, 2 spindle whorls, and a fossil recovered from a grave. The building stone included 2 complete hexagonal tiles and other broken tiles with nails *in situ*.

The assemblage has plenty of potential for further study. Identification of sources and comparison with other Roman sites locally, for example Ilchester (Leach 1982, Leach 1991) and Catsgore (Leech 1982), and further afield, will add to our understanding of trade patterns across the region. One of the querns, for example, is made of a conglomerate that has turned up *inter alia* at Worcester to the north, from excavations at both Sidbury and Deansway (Roe forthcoming a, Roe forthcoming b). Some of the stone has travelled quite far, for example the Kentish rag, Purbeck marble and slate of south western origin, while good use has also been made of local materials.

Preliminary assessment has included making a draft catalogue, measuring the depth of the tiles (to differentiate them from paving stones and to enable comparison with data from other sites), and the compilation of a list of stone types. Further work will include finalising the catalogue and preparing a descriptive text. Useful fieldwork would include a check on types of stone in the Shepton Mallet area, to be combined with inspection of the stone coffin, and exploration of the area of ORS in the Failand area to the south of Bristol to look for matching quern materials. It is intended to report on 2 thin sections, which are also planned as reference material.

#### **Objects of jet and shale (Lynne Bevan and Iain Ferris)**

A brief assessment suggested a late 3rd to 4th century date for this small assemblage. Objects of jet comprise a pin-head, 3 incomplete pin-shafts, and an unidentified fragment. The worked shale assemblage comprises a near complete shale bowl and 2 further bowl fragments, 2 bracelet fragments and a spacer bead.

#### **4.7 Worked bone**

Hairpins were the most common find, represented by 1 complete pin, 7 pin-heads and 14 pin-shafts. Other finds were 1 decorated knife handle, 1 incomplete spoon with graffito, and 1 gaming counter. A brief assessment indicated that although some 1st- to 2nd-century types were present, the majority of the assemblage dated to the 3rd and 4th centuries, or possibly later. All the worked bone will need to be assessed by the animal bone specialist. In addition the pin shafts will require cataloguing and entry onto the database, and the 11 other finds will require more detailed analysis and illustration for publication.

#### **4.8 Mortar and plaster (Graham Morgan)**

Approximately 2kg of mortar/plaster were recovered, representing 13 samples and including 2 fragments of painted wall plaster. Samples are present from Buildings VII, VIII and IX, although the majority came from the latter, a villa-style building of some size. Some of the samples may prove too small for detailed analysis by fabric, but this will be undertaken where possible. Such analysis would provide information regarding

the source of the lime and aggregates used in the mortar, and might help to distinguish different building phases. Analysis of the pigments used might also suggest the status of the villa-style building from which the painted plaster was recovered, particularly if more exotic, and consequently more expensive, pigments were used. None will need illustration.

#### **4.9 Miscellaneous fired clay**

Five spindle whorls, a gaming counter and only 8 fragments of tile were recovered, although small quantities of tile may have been included with the pottery. This material will need cataloguing, inclusion in the database, and brief summary for publication. In addition there is approximately 1kg of burnt clay, some of which may be related to industrial activity. This will need to be assessed by Gerry MacDonnell and quantified for inclusion on the database. Only 2 objects require illustration for publication.

#### **4.10 Human remains (Russell Heath, with comments by Juliet Rogers)**

A total of 36 human bone assemblages were recovered from three small burial plots associated with the roadside settlement (Section 2.3.2 above). The condition of the bone from all the assemblages is good.

The majority of the assemblages have not been cleaned, and therefore only a brief assessment of their contents has been attempted at this stage (Tables 2, 3, 4 & 5, below). While the cemetery groups are small, the evidence suggests that they are probably complete or nearly complete, which greatly enhances their value, and the possibility of family groups seems high. The small pagan burial ground (Pagan Cemetery 2), adjacent to Building I and focussing on a mausoleum, may represent the private plot of the building's occupants. In the 'Christian' cemetery, burials 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21 were grouped together and very closely aligned, possibly indicating a family plot within the larger burial ground. The 'Christian' cemetery is, of course, of particular interest because of the presence of the chi-rho amulet, and the importance of this burial group will be enhanced by the programme of radiocarbon dating which is proposed (see Section 5.2, below).

Following cleaning, further work should involve compilation of a bone inventory; demographic, anthropological and pathological analysis; and writing of a report. Given the possibility of family groups, thorough

examination for discontinuous traits which may indicate genetic linkage will be of importance. Discussion of the criteria for metric analysis and for the examination of discontinuous traits will be necessary, as these often differ between osteologists.

**Table 2: Pagan Cemetery 1**

Assemblage	Feature	Sex	Age	Comments
HB.7	F.100	?	Immature	16 years or less
HB.8	F.101	Female	Adult	
HB.9	F.102			
HB.10	F.103	Male	Adult	Much tooth loss antemortem
HB.11	F.104	Female	Young adult	20 years +
HB.26	F.124	?	Adult	Outside plot boundary
HB.33	F.359	?	Neonatal	
HB.34	F.438	?	Adult	Little bone
HB.35	F.437	?	Adult	Little bone

**Table 3: Pagan Cemetery 2**

Assemblage	Feature	Sex	Age	Comments
HB.?	F.107?			
HB.12	F.106	?	40 years +	Lead coffin
HB.13	F.108	? Female	Adult	
HB.14	F.109	Male	Adult	
HB.15	F.110	? Female	Adult	
HB.24	F.120	Female	Young adult	Sarcophagus

**Table 4: 'Christian' Cemetery**

Assemblage	Feature	Sex	Age	Comments
HB.1		Female	Adult	
HB.2		Female	Adult	
HB.3	F.41	?	Adult	Little present
HB.4	F.42	?	Adult	Little present
HB.5		?		
HB.6		?	Adult	
HB.16	F.112	Male	Young Adult	1* neonatal
HB.17	F.117	Male	Adult	
HB.18	F.114	? Female	Adolescent	
HB.19	F.115	? Male	Adult	
HB.20	F.116	?	Immature	
HB.21	F.113	Male	Adult 40+	
HB.22	F.50	Male	Adult	Chi-rho amulet
HB.23	F.126	?	Young adult	
HB.25	F.123	Female	Adult	
HB.27	F.127	Female	Adult	
HB.28	F.127	Female	Elderly	
HB.29	F.132	?	Adult	



**Table 5: Human bone assemblages not associated with cemetery areas**

Assemblage	Feature	Sex	Age	Comments
HB.30	F.131	?	Immature	
HB.31	F.134	?	Adult	From machining
HB.32	F.134	?	Neonatal	From machining

#### 4.11 Animal bone (Sebastian Payne)

For the purposes of assessment samples of the main stratified groups, representing between a third and a half of the bone from the buildings, were briefly examined.

Table 6 provides rough weights and counts of the 'more useful bones' - ie jaws, long-bone ends, etc, together with counts of loose teeth, and of bones with useful measurements (M).

**Table 6: Rough Quantification of Animal Bone Assessed**

	Building VII	Building IXX	Building IX	Total
Weight looked at	10.4	1.0	3.6	15.0 kg
(Total weight of bags > 100g)	(16.4)	(4.0)	(8.8)	(29.2) kg
<b>Cattle</b>				
Jaws	1	-	2	3
L-b ends etc.	39 (7M)	8 (2M)	29 (7M)	76 (16M)
Loose teeth	40	-	26	66
<b>Sheep/goat</b>				
Jaws	1	-	5	6
L-b ends etc.	6 (1M)	3 (1M)	6 (1M)	15 (3M)
Loose teeth	11	13	21	45
<b>Pig</b>				
Jaws	1	-	1	2
L-b ends etc.	-	-	4	4
Loose teeth	1	2	-	3
<b>Horse (not subdiv)</b>	2 (1M)	1	2 (1M)	5 (2M)
<b>Dog (not subdiv)</b>	3 (1M)	-	1	4 (2M)
<b>Chicken</b>	3 (2M)	-	8 (1M)	11 (3M)
<b>Total useful</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>240 (28M)</b>

From the table it is apparent that the collection is dominated by the usual domesticates: cattle is, as in most Roman collections, the commonest species, followed by sheep and goat (both present); pig and horse are fairly scarce. No deer or other wild species were noted. Multiplying up

from the sample examined provides a crude estimate, for the bones from the buildings, of a total of between 500 and 750 'more useful bones'; it would be possible to double the numbers of identified bones by identifying shafts, vertebrae, etc.

This is not a large collection, and limits what can be usefully done. It will give some idea of the relative frequency of the different animals (with all the usual cautions about bias), and it would probably be worth taking the available measurements (to check that the sizes fall within Exeter norms) and recording ageing data from the mandibles and loose mandibular teeth; there will also be individual points of interest that are worth noting - for example, a sheep/goat astragalus that had probably gone through a dog was noted, and it would probably be worth making a few comments about butchery (use of cleavers rather than knives; vertebrae not split) and about the presence of cattle molars with reduced talonids. However, it is too small a collection for comparisons between different buildings or phases to reveal much, and the level of attrition and bias is probably fairly high - dog-gnawing occurred quite frequently, for example, and the variability of condition suggests that the bone has kicked about for a bit rather than coming from 'primary middens'.

If most of the bone is reasonably closely dated, a short report concentrating on the 'more useful bones' would be worthwhile, with brief comparisons with Ilchester and other local sites. An interesting question is whether this is a 'producer' or a 'consumer' site, as are the implications of the site being on a main road (the

presence of at least one juvenile horse bone is interesting). However, the collection is not worth very detailed recording or reporting, and it is doubtful whether the 'spot finds' are worth close examination unless there are specific questions to be asked (a brief scan to check there is nothing unexpected would probably be worthwhile).

The collection does not justify more than 3-4 weeks work.

#### 4.12 Plant remains (Russell Heath, with comments by Vanessa Straker)

##### Assessment Methodology

All flotation was conducted using modified siraf tank (York variant). No paraffin was used in this operation. It was decided that any advantages the use of such unpleasant chemicals could provide to flot separation would be outweighed by increased handling of the flot necessary to remove them. A five hundred micron sieve was used to collect the flot.

The initial assessment of the flot was carried out using a microscope on x10 magnification. Representative samples of the flot from each context were checked for carbonised organics. No attempt was made at this stage to distinguish between individual species represented in the carbonised remains. The results of the assessment are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: Plant remains: sample sizes and flotation results

	Context	Initial Wt.	Mineral Residue	Flot Wt.
	Feature F130, hearth, Area IV	1140	18g	10.9g
	Feature F133, Subrectangular feature, cess pit, Area IV	1143		0.2g
	Feature F317	1360	225g	0.0g
	Feature F371, Hearth	1591	200g	35.4g
	Feature F411, pot fill from oven, Building I		250g	0.2g
	Large vessel, contents	1334	200g	18.5g
	Large vessel, surrounding material	1334	15g	2.0g
	Floor layer, Building VII	1518	11g	0.5g
	Scatter of burnt material, Area X	6044	500g	148.0g
	Pot 1, contents		800g	5.0g

## Notes and discussion

Sample F130 and those relating to the pot in context 1334 appear to be composed mainly of wood charcoal. The 1334 samples also contain small amounts of slag and lead, suggesting possible industrial activity.

Pot 1, contains some carbonised material which requires further analysis, possibly remains of the pot's original contents. The pot from F.411 is contaminated with modern roots and contains little of interest.

Cereal grains present in large quantities in context 6044 are chaff free, suggesting that they were not processed *in situ*. There is, however, possible chaff present in the samples from context 1518 and F371.

While the assemblage of carbonised plant remains from Shepton Mallet is not large it is of considerable importance because no samples are yet available from Roman sites in the immediate vicinity. Considering the site in its broader context, useful comparisons can be made with the samples from Ilchester (Murphy in Leach 1982) and Catsgore (Hillman in Leech 1982)

### 4.13 Shell (Lynne Bevan)

10 complete oyster shells and 65 shell fragments were recovered, of which 5 complete and 43 fragmentary shells came from stratified contexts. These require cataloguing for archive and inclusion in the database.

## 5.0 DATING

### 5.1 The artefacts

The only evidence for pre-Roman activity on the site was provided by the unstratified neolithic flint assemblage. The pottery and coin evidence, which is discussed in more detail in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 above, indicated a sequence of activity beginning in the late 1st or 2nd century and continuing through to the late 3rd and 4th centuries. The main period of occupation seems to have been during the latter period, and possibly beyond. Further dating evidence is provided by finds such as vessel glass, brooches and hairpins of bone, jet and shale, all of which include 1st- or 2nd-century material in predominantly 3rd/4th century assemblages.

## 5.2 Radiocarbon analysis

Up to 12 samples of human bone from different individuals belonging to the suspected Christian cemetery of E-W graves should be submitted for radiocarbon analysis. The discovery of the ?early 5th-century silver amulet cross in one grave suggests that this cemetery is potentially of post-Roman date, and may thus have an important bearing upon the final phase of the settlement at the late/post-Roman transition. The value of radiocarbon dates from this site around this period would be enhanced by those obtained from the cemeteries at Cannington and Henley Wood in the region.

High precision dates will be required, and it is hoped the analysis can be carried out through English Heritage, with whom negotiations are currently in progress.

## 6.0 POST-EXCAVATION RESEARCH DESIGN

### 6.1 Results and research potential

Some further consideration is required of the research potential, and significance in the wider context of Romano-British archaeology, of the results summarised in Section 2.0 and the associated finds assemblages (Section 4.0).

No detailed research design was formulated prior to the commencement of this field project (2.1), but the methodology employed and the results obtained do, nevertheless, integrate well with valid research themes. These may be expressed at two levels: (a) site-specific and local regional research objectives; (b) wide-ranging, inter-site and cultural research. Inevitably, there will be some overlap between the two.

#### I. Broad-based themes

- a) The need for further study of (for the most part poorly understood) smaller Romano-British urban settlements, notably of the roadside type, and a requirement for the examination of large areas with well preserved remains has been emphasised recently (Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies 1985, 4.3.3; Burnham & Wachter 1990, 320). The circumstances and results from Shepton Mallet

are relevant and opportune in both respects.

- b) Both the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies (1985, 5.1.1.) and English Heritage (1990, 42) emphasise the importance of investigating periods of transition in past societies. For Shepton Mallet there are opportunities to study a native Iron Age to non-military Romano-British transition, as well as a late/post-Roman transition with Christian overtones, particularly in the context of further data already available and likely to be forthcoming from adjacent sites in the Fosse Lane complex.
- c) Regionally, Shepton Mallet is a new element in the relatively well known, if selectively studied, Romano-British landscape of South West England. Its value comparatively is enhanced with reference to data published or in press from other contemporary urban centres, e.g. Camerton (Wedlake 1958), Bath (Cunliffe 1988; Cunliffe & Davenport 1985, etc.) Ilchester (Leach 1982 and 1991, etc.) or Sea Mills (Ellis 1987). Equally, an understanding of the rural context has been much advanced by investigation and publication of villas such as Cheddar (Hirst & Rahtz 1973) Gatcombe (Brannigan 1977) or Lufton (Hayward 1952 and 1972); other rural settlements or landscapes such as the Chew Valley (Rahtz & Greenfield 1977), Catsgore (Leech 1982) and Bradley Hill (Leech 1981); or temples including Brean Down (Apsimon 1964), Pagans Hill (Rahtz 1951 & Rahtz & Watts 1990), or Lamyatt Beacon (Leech 1986).
- d) The comparative Romano-British regional research theme (1c) leads into and overlaps with more specifically hinterland-orientated research objectives. There are opportunities for a broader multi-period look at human settlement in a landscape zone centred upon the locality of Shepton Mallet, such as is advocated in the document 'Developing Frameworks' (English Heritage 1990, 44). The Romano-British hinterland apart, a fuller analysis of the Fosse Lane data and their significance could contribute to research into regional post-Roman urban origins and development, in the light of work undertaken at such important and nearby early medieval settlements as Wells or Glastonbury.

## 2. Site-specific themes

- a) The attainment of so large and extensive a sample of structural and artefactual remains at Shepton Mallet, from both core and peripheral zones, should have provided sufficient material for a valid characterisation of the settlement as a whole. Furthermore, this characterisation of a formerly unknown and unexplored site will provide the context and touchstone for further discoveries, some already known or anticipated, arising from continuing development in and around the settlement.
- b) Questions relating to both the origin and fate of Roman Shepton can be addressed to the data recovered, and some estimation of the settlement's status, size and varied fortunes through time may be possible.
- c) The wide range of structures and layouts encountered permits some study of their specific function and character, with reference to extensive survival, collection and recording of artefact and ecofact data. Likewise, a range of activities relating to the social and economic basis of the settlement is capable of study; from the remains and products of industrial or agricultural occupations, to the remains of people themselves, their potential status, quality of life or religious beliefs.
- d) Further justification for the study of artefact and ecofact data recovered from the site is to be found in Sections 4.1 - 4.13 previously, and in 6.2 below; the data range, extent, quality and recorded context permit worthwhile intra- and extra-site comparative study, as well as greatly enhancing the value of the structural and stratigraphic records and thus justify most of the research potential outlined in the foregoing review.

## 6.2 The finds: objectives and procedures

### 6.2.1 Introduction

The method of recovery used for the majority of finds provides a rare opportunity to plot the spatial distribution of finds across an extensive site, with the following aims in mind:

- To assess the date of individual structures and features across the site

- To assess the function and status of individual structures, and within them more specific activity areas
- To assess the function of specific artefact types in relation to the structures in which they are found
- To assess the site formation processes and patterns of rubbish disposal, levelling and dumping
- To assess the methods of recovery, recording and plotting and their potential for future research

The value of spatial plotting of pottery is recognised by both medieval and Roman specialists. Moorhouse (1986, 85), for example, notes: "perhaps the most important contribution that pottery can make comes, surprisingly, in a field which has been little explored - its distribution on site" (1986, 85); while Fulford and Huddleston (1991, 41), in their review of the current state of Romano-British pottery studies, observe: "the most interesting recent developments concern those sites where large-scale spatial studies have been made", and stress the need for more such innovative studies to be carried out.

The technique has also usefully been applied to the study of small finds. Moorhouse (*ibid*) cites its use by John Steane in his study of nail distribution patterns on Site D at Lyveden, Northamptonshire (Bryant and Steane 1971, 32), where it was used to suggest not only the positions of wooden doors and windows in the building, but also the different types of nails which were used on each. Obviously the maximum potential will only be realised if all artefact types are considered together. It will therefore be necessary to have uniform cataloguing methods for all specialists, and good communication, not just between the excavator and the pottery researcher as recommended by Fulford and Huddleston (*ibid*), but between all members of the project team.

Cross-context joins will be analysed, alongside fragmentation and abrasion, for pottery (as described below) and where possible other artefacts. Similar methods have been used

elsewhere to study site formation processes. Examples include Sandal Castle (Moorhouse 1983), to indicate the room or building in which vessels had been used or broken; Hillam Burchard, West Yorkshire (Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1987), to study the effects of ploughing and suggest phases of activity; and Kirkstall Abbey (Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1986), to study the way soil was moved around the site for raising and levelling areas during building activity.

The function and status of structures and the activity areas within them will be assessed from the pottery forms and artefact types present. The value of this method has been tested on structures of known function, for example Kirkstall Abbey (Moorhouse and Slowikowski 1986, Fig 55) where the distribution of dripping pans correlated with the position of the principal kitchen and meat kitchen.

All datable artefacts will be plotted to assess the date of structures and the features relating to them, and to see if any patterns of residuality emerge.

The principal method of excavation employed at Fosse Lane, involving only 'first-level' definition over wide areas, limits the potential for the study of vertical distributions of finds, the benefits of which have been discussed by Brown (1985). In addition, assessment of the plotted finds indicates that, as might be expected, the photographed surface represents a number of chronological periods, so that it is unlikely that that it will be possible to reconstruct the character of the entire site at any one point in time. Despite this there is still enormous potential in the application of this technique. The proposed structure of the database to be used, linked to AutoCAD for the purposes of spatial plotting and analysis, is described in Section 6.2.2 below.

### 6.2.2 Database structure

A single database is proposed for which all database fields are listed, those requiring AutoCAD plotting being noted under heading 2. Key Systems of Redditch have agreed to assist with the development of the software as part of their 'Key Archaeology' programme.

## 1. List of proposed database fields

Field Name	Type
Plot Number	Character (This will form the primary reference number)
East	Character
North	Character
Context	Character
Feature	Character
Structure	Character
Material	Character (ceramic, iron, copper, lead, silver, pewter, slag, glass, stone, bone etc.)
Type	Character (pot, brooch, pin, coin, brick, window glass etc.)
Count	Numeric (number of fragments)
Weight	Numeric (weight in grams)
Date	Character (approximately 10 codes)

### Fields required for type = pot

Field Name	Type
Fabric code	Character (approximately 70 codes)
Fabric name	Character/numeric? (eg GRY1, GRY2; approximately 70 codes)
Form code	Character (approximately 250 codes)
Form name	Character (eg AMPHORA, BEAKER, BOWL, DISH, etc; approximately 25 codes)
Sherd type	Character (rim, body, handle, base)
Diameter	Character (for rims and bases)
Percentage	Character (percentage of rim/base extant)
Decoration	Character (approximately 30 codes)
Drawing number	Character (unique number for drawn sherds)
Cross Fit	Character (unique number for individual vessels represented by cross-context joins)
Abrasion	logical (yes/no)
Comments	Character (approximate;y 20 codes)

### Fields required for all other types

Field Name	Type
Subtype	Character (brooch or pin type, for example)
Class	Character (eg agricultural tool, industrial tool, building material, personal ornament)
Status	Character (High, low, religious, etc)
Comments	Memo

## 2. List of fields requiring plotting on AutoCAD

Material
Type
Fabric name (only for type = pot)
Form code (only for type = pot. Only a few form numbers will require plotting, generally form name will be sufficient)
Form name (only for type = pot)
Decoration (only for type = pot. Only a few decoration types will require plotting)
Cross fit (only for type = pot)
Comments (only for type = pot. It may be useful to plot some comments, for example the presence of sooting or residues)
Date
Subtype
Class (only for type other than pot)
Status

### 6.3 Stratigraphic and structural record: objectives and procedures

The circumstances and evolution of the excavation project at Fosse Lane, outlined in Sections 2.1. and 2.2, dictated in part the objectives and methodology employed to obtain stratigraphic and structural records of the site. Two principal approaches were adopted: (1) vertical photographic recording; and (2) conventional context excavation recording by written pro-forma, graphic and photographic means.

#### 1) Vertical photographic recording (Section 2.2 (a))

This method was applied at a 'first-level' horizon of site clearance to obtain records of high quality and accuracy as economically as possible. Given a topsoil-stripped area of approximately 2 hectares, severe limitations of time and manpower resources, and a relatively horizontal site at this stage of definition, this recording technique promised the most extensive and cost effective coverage, and arguably a more accurate and objective result. This effectiveness and economy of application in the field is balanced by a more intensive input at the post-excavation stage.

#### Procedures

- a) Following experimentation with alternative techniques for the translation of information from the photographic record, hand-pasting of a prepared mosaic of photographs at a scale of *c.* 1:25 onto individual A1 sheets is undertaken. These are protected with transparent plastic film and form a basic archive record (*c.* 65 sheets) of structural elements exposed at this horizon, from which site plans can be obtained.
- b) Interpretative A1 overlay drawings on film are prepared, involving the graphic outline definition of consecutively numbered single contexts, combined with a basic and simplified written pro-forma record based upon a standardised BUFAU system.
- c) A further stage of interpretation will involve the definition of a range of context

types expressed by conventions, coupled with such information on stratigraphic relationships as can be determined through examination of the photographic record, or by sample excavation where applied at the time on site.

- d) The simplified outline plans of single contexts, with their relevant conventionalised physical and stratigraphic characteristics, are then digitised and stored to computer using AutoCAD for further analysis, graphic manipulation and display.
- e) Computer plots from AutoCAD will then form the basis for many publication site plans, in combination, where appropriate, with the primary vertical photographic record for additional detail.
- f) Subsequent levels of post-excavation analysis and interpretation will exploit the linkage between the finds data-base and AutoCAD. A broad range of finds data can be plotted with reference to the suite of context types and known relationships and thus enhance the value of the records of both data sets. This in turn will maximise the opportunities for chronological, structural, functional, economic and social interpretation.

(Details of computer hardware and software requirements will be found in Section 9.)

#### 2) Conventional context excavation recording

This system of site investigation was applied more selectively in sample areas throughout the excavation site, according to criteria outlined in Section 2.2. This more familiar recording procedure based upon numerical definition of single archaeological contexts, provides (i) in-depth information relating to a broad and representative spectrum of context and structure types on the site; (ii) stratigraphic and chronological sequences from across the area; (iii) amplification of, or a complement to, the more extensive, though narrower dimension of vertical photographic coverage.

## Procedures

- a) Analysis, integration and interpretation of the written, graphic and photographic record will be undertaken in conjunction with the finds database for individual areas or structures in the first instance.
- b) Wherever possible these analyses will be integrated with the results and analyses arising from 'first level' vertical photographic recording.
- c) The combination and interpretation of data from these approaches, and the finds analysis will form the basis of an overall definitive site structural and chronological sequence.

## 7.0 PUBLICATION SYNOPSIS

### 7.1 Introduction

A synopsis is suggested with a view to a single, monograph-style publication, A4 format, comprising introductory and methodological chapters, the site narrative, the finds and environmental reports, and an interpretative discussion chapter. The line illustrations will be integrated where appropriate into the relevant chapters, and a selection of photographs will be included. The use of smaller-size print for presenting certain information - eg some parts of finds specialist reports - will avoid any necessity for microfiche. It is proposed that it would be appropriate for the single volume report to be published as a Sheffield Excavation Report, University of Sheffield, in their excavation monograph series, or alternatively as a volume in the English Heritage Archaeological Reports series.

While the proposed format of the report is essentially conventional, the contents will reflect the post-excavation procedures, with a close integration of 'site' and 'finds' data, and appropriate weight given to research framework and methodology (together with a review of the success of the methods applied).

## 7.2 The Text

"Fosse Lane, Shepton Mallet:

Excavations on the site of a Romano-British 'small town' in 1990"

by Peter Leach and Jane Evans  
with contributions by

L. Bevan, B. Dickinson, (a bone specialist), S. Esmonde Cleary, I. M. Ferris, R. Heath, M. Henig, C. Johns, D. Mackreth, J.G. McDonnell, G. Morgan, J. Price, F. Roe, J. Rogers, V. Straker and D. Williams.

### Introduction

Background and circumstances of excavation, research aims, the site and its setting, volume summary (2,000 words, 3 figures, 2 photographs)

### Methodology

Site and finds recording procedures, excavation samples, records and archive, outline of analytical procedures (2,000 words, 1 figure, 1 photograph).

### The Site

#### 1. Excavation and recording narrative -

<b>Introduction</b>	2,000 words, 1 figure
<b>2. The Southern enclosures</b>	2,500 words, 4 figures, 3 photos
<b>3. Streets</b>	1,000 words, 2 figures, 2 photos
<b>4. Cemeteries</b>	6,000 words, 10 figures, 8 photos
<b>5. Building I</b>	4,000 words, 4 figures, 5 photos
<b>6. The Northern enclosures and Fosse Lane frontage (evaluation trenches)</b>	3,000 words, 4 figures, 3 photos
<b>7. Building VII</b>	7,000 words, 6 figures, 6 photos
<b>8. Building VIII</b>	5,000 words, 4 figures, 4 photos
<b>9. Buildings IX and X</b>	6,000 words, 7 figures, 6 photos
<b>10. Interpretative Discussion</b>	5,000 words



## The Finds

### 1. Introduction by J. Evans

Outline of general finds research aims, integrated data base, and analytical methods (2,000 words)

### 2. The worked flint by L. Bevan

(2,000 words, 15 illustrations = 1 figure)

### 3. The Romano-British pottery by J. Evans with contributions by B. Dickinson (samian), D. Williams (amphorae and thin sections), and K. Hartley (mortaria stamps)

All artefact information relating to the date, function or status of individual structures/activity areas or the site as a whole will be integrated into the site narrative. The pottery report itself will comprise the following:

Introduction - a brief description of the methodology and aims of analysis and the size and quality of the assemblage.

Discussion by fabric/form - full quantification of fabrics by site and if possible period; descriptions of the fabrics and forms present with more detailed fabric descriptions for the less-well-published wares.

General discussion - to include a comparison between the various assemblages, a discussion of the spatial analysis where it produces information relating specifically to the interpretation of the pottery, and a discussion of the assemblage in its regional context.

It is estimated that up to 200 sherds will require illustration for publication (6 figures), plus 2 figures showing intra-site pottery plots and 2 figures showing regional distributions. These will be selected on the basis of their significance to the following:

- The interpretation and dating of the site
- Definition of the character of the assemblage
- The wider research aims of the project

During selection account will be taken of the detail in which wares have previously been published. In addition, graphs and pie charts will be used to present the data

clearly and concisely.

(10,000 words, 10 figures)

### 4. The Metalwork by I. M. Ferris with contributions by A.S. Esmonde Cleary (coins), M. Henig, D. Mackreth (brooches), C. Johns (silver amulet), G. McDonnell (metalworking residues), Unknown (lead coffins)

(11,000 words, 165 illustrations = 10 figures, 3 photographs)

### 5. The Intaglio by M. Henig

(500 words, 1 photograph)

### 6. The Glass by J. Price and L. Bevan

(2,000 words, 35 illustrations = 1 figure)

### 7. The Worked stone by F. Roe

(2,000 words, 27 illustrations = 4 figures)

### 8. Mortar and plaster by G. Morgan

(1,000 words)

### 9. Miscellaneous fired clay by L. Bevan

(500 words, 2 illustrations)

### 10. Human remains by R. Heath and J. Rogers

(2,500 words, 1 figure, 1 photograph)

### 11. Animal bone author unknown

(2,000 words, 2 figures)

### 12. Plant remains by V. Straker

(1,000 words, 1 figure)

## General Discussion

Review of the results and their wider regional and national significance, provisional social and economic model, review of methodologies, future research opportunities (8,000 words, 6 figures).

## Bibliography

(2,000 words)

## 7.3 Illustrations

It is not possible at this stage of the project to give a precise list of all the figures required to accompany the text. This will depend in part upon the processing and graphic transcription of the site vertical photographic record (Section 6.0). Estimates of the likely number of figures for each section are given in Section 7.2 (above). The following list is thus a provisional estimate:

## Introduction

1. Site location
2. Hinterland - geomorphology, archaeology, modern settlement
3. Geology

## Methodology

1. Excavation site, principal existing modern features.

## The Site

### Excavation site

1. Archaeological features

### Southern enclosures

1. Overall plan
2. Well and structures, west enclosure
3. Enclosure boundaries, plans and sections
4. Selected internal features - plans

### Streets

1. Street A plan
2. Street C plan and relationships

### Cemeteries

1. West cemetery plan
2. West cemetery graves
3. Building I cemetery plan
4. Mausoleum plan and sections
5. Building I graves and lead coffin
6. 'Christian' cemetery plan
7. 'Christian' cemetery graves
8. 'Christian' cemetery graves
9. 'Christian' cemetery graves
10. 'Christian' cemetery and lead coffin

### Building I

1. Building I overall plan
2. Wall foundations and elevations
3. Industrial features, plans and sections
4. Post-Building I structures

### Northern Enclosures & evaluation trenches

1. Overall plan
2. Detail of structures plan
3. Enclosure boundaries
4. Evaluation trench plans and section

### Building VII

1. First phase plan

2. Wall elevations
3. Second phase plan
4. Sections
5. Rooms 2 and 3 destruction plan
6. Ditch F318 plan and sections

### Building VIII

1. Primary building plan over ditch F351
2. Sections
3. Ovens and associated features, plans and sections
4. Post-building features plan

### Building IX and X

1. Building IX general plan
2. Building IX North room plan primary phase
3. Building IX North room plan final phase
4. Building IX sections
5. Building X general plan
6. Building X primary phase and section - North end
7. Building IX suggested reconstructions

### Finds

1. Worked Flint
- 2-6. Coarse Wares
7. Samian
- 8-9. Regional distributions of pottery
- 10-11. Intra-site distributions
- 12-21. Metalwork
22. Glass
- 23-26. Worked stone
27. Human remains
- 28-9. Animal remains
30. Plant remains

### General Discussion

1. Plan of evaluations around Fosse Lane
- 2-5. Intra-site artefact distribution maps
6. Romano-British settlement in East Somerset

Estimated total number of words: 92,000

Estimated total number of figures: 82

Estimated total number of photographs: 45

## 8.0 CASCADE DIAGRAM

Time divisions (across the page) are 'months', calculated as 4-week periods. The costings (Section 9.0, below) are based on this diagram, broken down into successive financial years and assuming a July 1991 start date.

### Personnel:

FA - Finds Assistant (unnamed)  
 PEA - Post-Excavation Assistant (unnamed)  
 LB - Lynne Bevan (Finds Supervisor)  
 SB - Simon Buteux (Unit Manager)  
 MB - Mark Breedon (Illustrator)  
 BD - Brenda Dickinson (Samian)  
 LD - Lucie Dingwall (Supervisor)  
 ND - Nigel Dodds (Illustrator)  
 SEC - Simon Esmonde Cleary (Coins)

JE - Jane Evans (Finds Officer)  
 JF - Iain Ferris (Unit Assistant Director)  
 CG - Caroline Gait (Senior Illustrator)  
 RH - Russell Heath (Environmental Assistant)  
 EH - Elizabeth Hooper (Publications Officer)  
 PJL - Peter Leach (Unit Assistant Director)  
 MH - Martin Henig (Small Finds)  
 DM - Don Mackreth (Brooches)  
 GMcD - Gerry McDonnell (Metalworking residues)  
 GM - Graham Morgan (Plaster & Mortar)  
 JP - Jenny Price (Glass)  
 FR - Fiona Roe (Worked Stone)  
 JR - Juliette Rogers (Human Bone)  
 JS - Jon Sterenberg (Field Officer)  
 VS - Vanessa Straker (Plant Remains)  
 DFW - David Williams (Amphora & Thin Sections)  
 ABW - Ann Woodward (Academic Editor)

## 9.0 PROVISIONAL COSTING

The provisional costing below is based on the assumption that the post-excavation project will commence on 1 July 1991, and will continue over a 5-year period to publication of the final report. The projected costs for each financial year are presented separately. Staff costs are itemised by member of staff and task to be carried out, the latter numbered according to the system used in the cascade diagram (Section 8.0), with which the costing may be cross-referenced. An inflation rate of 7.5% is assumed each year. The following items of capital equipment will be required, and are costed into the budget for the 1991/2 financial year:

Tandon 386slsx 110Mb Computer	£2,369.36 + VAT
Tandon VGA 14" Monitor	£429.99 + VAT
Kurta A4 Digitiser	£434.37 + VAT
AutoCAD/386 ed 11 (25/11/90)	£450.00 + VAT
Key ARCHAEOLOGY Software database with AutoCAD link and utilities	£1,316.28 + VAT

### 1991/2 Financial Year (Commencing July 1991)

#### Project Staff Costs

<u>Task No</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1.	Lynne Bevan	28 weeks	4,900
1.	Finds Assistant	28 weeks	4,312
2./4.	Jon Sterenberg	32 weeks	7,744
2./4.	Lucie Dingwall	32 weeks	6,880
3.	Peter Leach	16 weeks	7,716
5.	Peter Leach	16 weeks	7,716
6.	Mark Breedon	8 weeks	1,760
7.	Post-Exc Assistant	6 weeks	924
8.	Jane Evans	4 weeks	1,395
9.	Jane Evans	8 days	512
10./11.	Simon Buteux	3 days	219
10./11.	Peter Leach	3 days	267
10./11.	Jane Evans	3 days	192

Admin. Staff Costs charged as an overhead

Simon Buteux	Unit Manager	1,101
Jackie Pearson	Administrator	558
Ann Humphries	Secretary	576

Equipment and Expenses

Tandon Computer	2,784
Tandon Monitor	505
Kurta Digitiser	510
AutoCAD	529
Key ARCHAEOLOGY database software and development	1547
Drawing Office materials	550
Photocopying	100
Office Costs	350
Travel	150
Finds Storage and Conservation materials	355
University Overheads	7,119

Total £61,271

**1992/3 Financial Year**

Project Staff Costs

12.i	Simon Esmonde Cleary		1,020
12.iii	Iain Ferris	23 days	1,771
12.iii	Lynne Bevan	1 day	38
12.iv	Lynne Bevan	3 days	114
12.vi	Lynne Bevan	2 days	76
12.vii	Fiona Roe		80
12.viii	Graham Morgan		150
12.ix	Lynne Bevan	17 days	646
12.xi	Russell Heath	11 weeks	2,090
12.xi	Juliet Rogers		345
12.xii	Animal bone specialist		1,500
13.	Jane Evans	12 weeks	4,128
14.	Jane Evans	1 week	344
16.	Jane Evans	25 weeks	8,600
17.	Lynne Bevan	14 weeks	2,632
17.	Jane Evans	1 week	344
18.	Lynne Bevan	10 weeks	1,880
18.	Jane Evans	3 days	207
19.	Lynne Bevan	2 weeks	376
19.	Jane Evans	2 weeks	688
20./21.	Simon Buteux	3 days	234
20./21.	Peter Leach	3 days	288
20./21.	Jane Evans	3 days	207
22.	Peter Leach	18 days	1,728
23.	Jane Evans	6 days	414

Admin. Staff Costs charged as an overhead

Simon Buteux	Unit Manager	1,576
Jackie Pearson	Administrator	800
Ann Humphries	Secretary	824

Expenses

Computer maintenance	430
Photocopying	200
Office costs	450
Travel	300
Materials	200
University Overheads	7,488
	<hr/>
	<b>£42,168</b>

**1993/4 Financial Year**Project Staff Costs

25.	Jane Evans	14 weeks	5,180
26.	Jane Evans	1 week	370
26.	Peter Leach	1 week	515
27.	Jane Evans	2 days	148
27.	Peter Leach	2 days	206
28.	Peter Leach	4 weeks	2,060
28.	Post-Exc. Assistant	1 week	178
29.	Lynne Bevan	4 weeks	808
29.	Post-Exc. Assistant	4 weeks	712
30.	Jane Evans	4 weeks	1,480
31.	Nigel Dodds	30 weeks	7,470
31.	Caroline Gait	30 weeks	8,880
32.	Mark Breedon	30 weeks	7,470
33.	Simon Buteux	2 days	168
33.	Peter Leach	2 days	206
33.	Jane Evans	2 days	148

Admin. Staff Costs charged as an overhead

Simon Buteux	Unit Manager	1,692
Jackie Pearson	Administrator	860
Ann Humphries	Secretary	884

Expenses

Drawing Office materials	730
Photocopying	300
Office Costs	450
Travel	250
University Overheads	4,125
	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,290</b>

**1994/5 Financial Year**Project Staff Costs

34.	Jane Evans	12 days	960
35.	Peter Leach	5 weeks	2,770
36.	Jane Evans	13 days	1,040
37.	Peter Leach	12 days	1,332
37.	Jane Evans	12 days	960
38.	Peter Leach	3 weeks	1,662

38.	Jane Evans	3 weeks	1,200
38.	Lynne Bevan	1 day	44
38.	Iain Ferris	1 day	510
38.	Russell Heath	1 day	44
39.	Caroline Gait	6 days	510
39.	Nigel Dodds	6 days	318
39.	Mark Breedon	6 days	318
40.	Nigel Dodds	8 days	424
41.	Simon Buteux	2 days	180
41.	Peter Leach	2 days	222
41.	Jane Evans	2 days	160
41.	Ann Woodward	2 days	274
41.	Caroline Gait	2 days	170
42.	Lynne Bevan	12 days	528
42.	Post-Exc. Assistant	12 days	456
43.	Peter Leach	12 days	1,332
43.	Elizabeth Hooper	12 days	1,060
44.	Ann Woodward	2 weeks	1,370

Admin. Staff Charged as an overhead

Simon Buteux	Unit Manager	900
Jackie Pearson	Administrator	462
Ann Humphries	Secretary	475

Expenses

Photography	500
Photocopying	350
Office Costs	200
Materials	200
Travel	150
University Overheads	2,927

**Total** 24,008

**1995/6 Financial Year**

44.	Peter Leach	3 weeks	1,785
44.	Jane Evans	3 weeks	1,270
44.	Ann Woodward	1 week	735
45.	Elizabeth Hooper	6 days	576

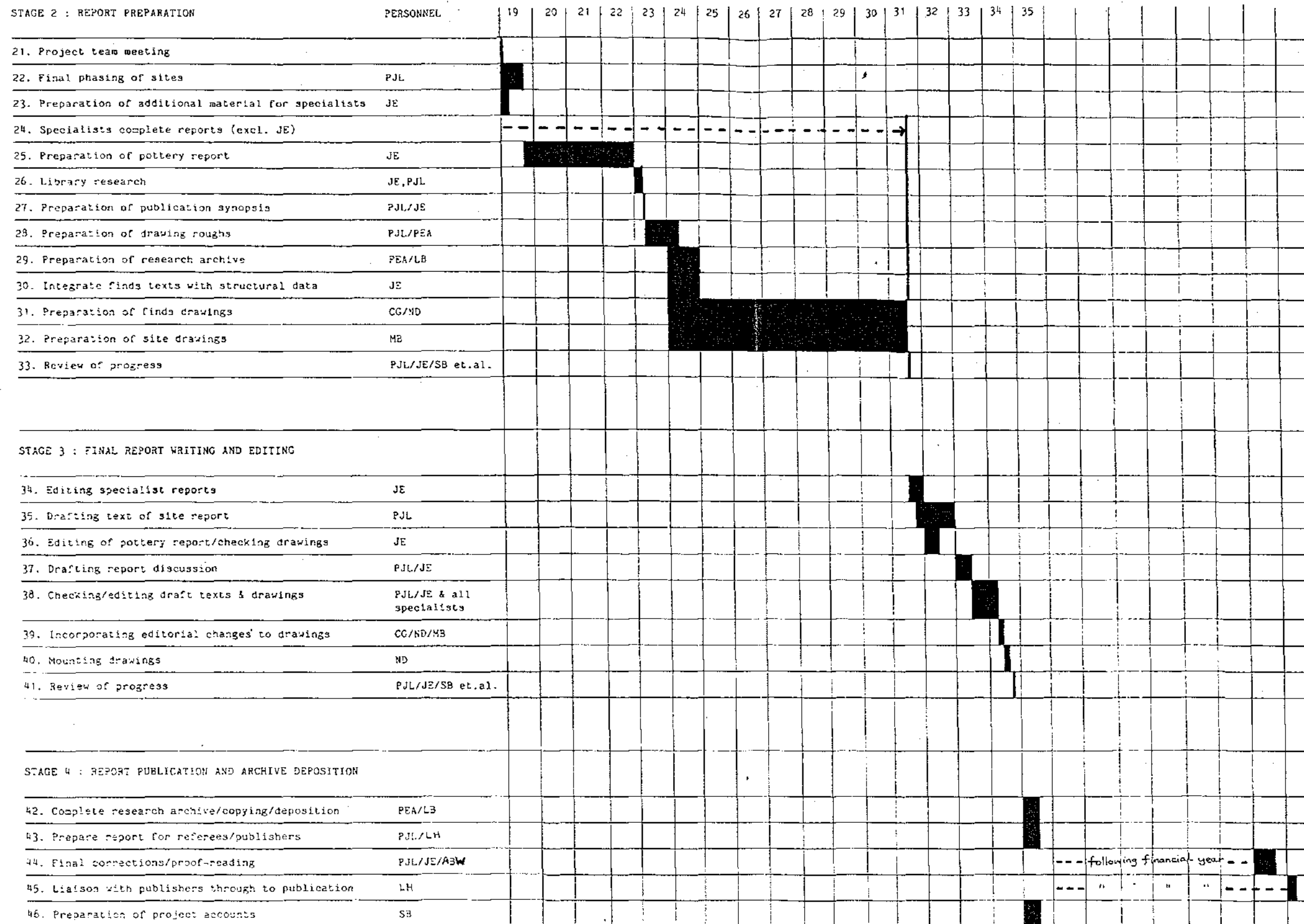
Expenses

Office Costs	150
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**Total** £4,516



Shepton Mallet Post Excavation Diagram Stages 2 - 4



--- following financial year ---



## 10.0 REFERENCES

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# FOSSE LANE Shepton Mallet

## Archaeological Investigations 1990-1

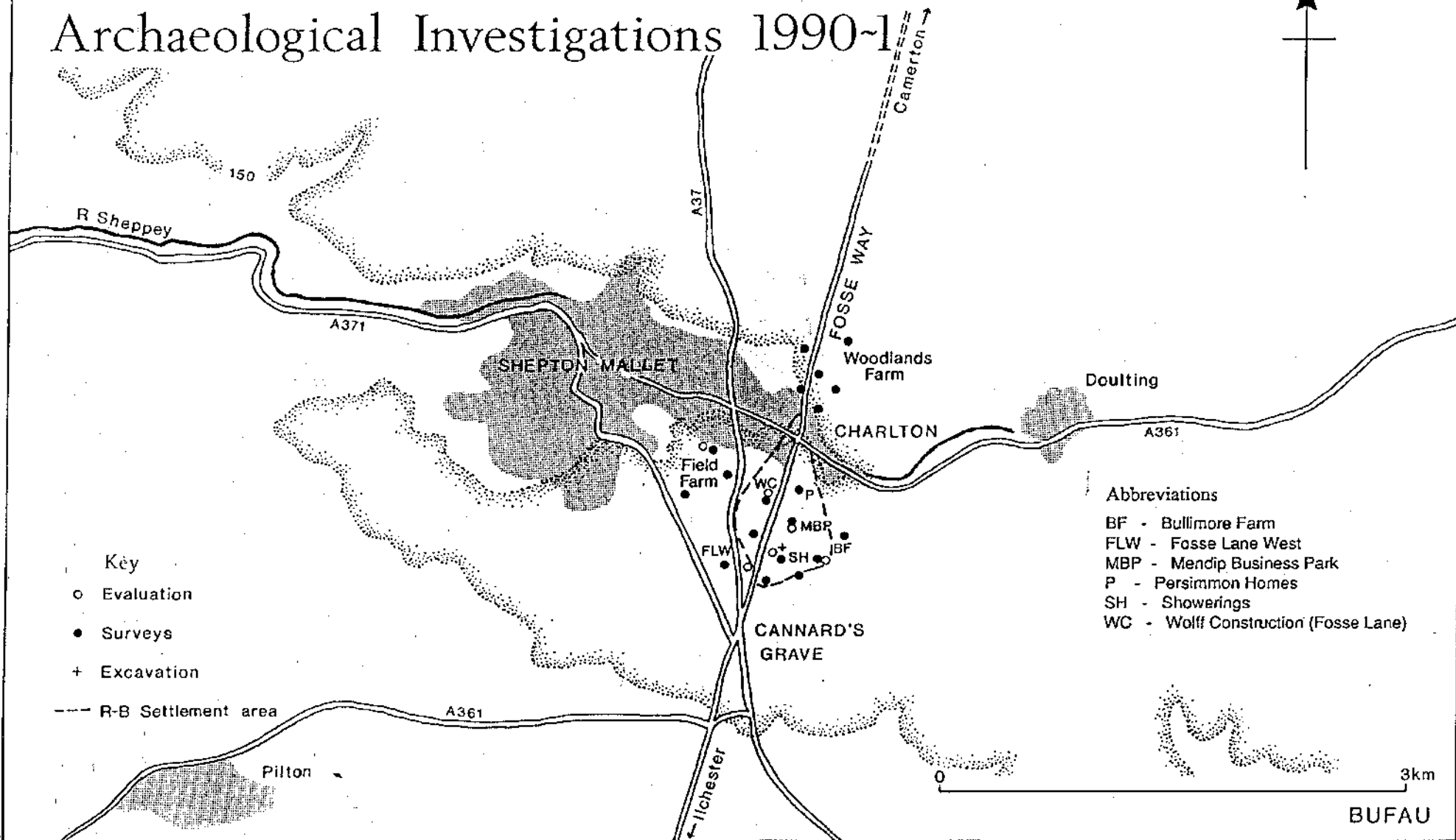


Fig. 1

# Excavations and Surveys 1990

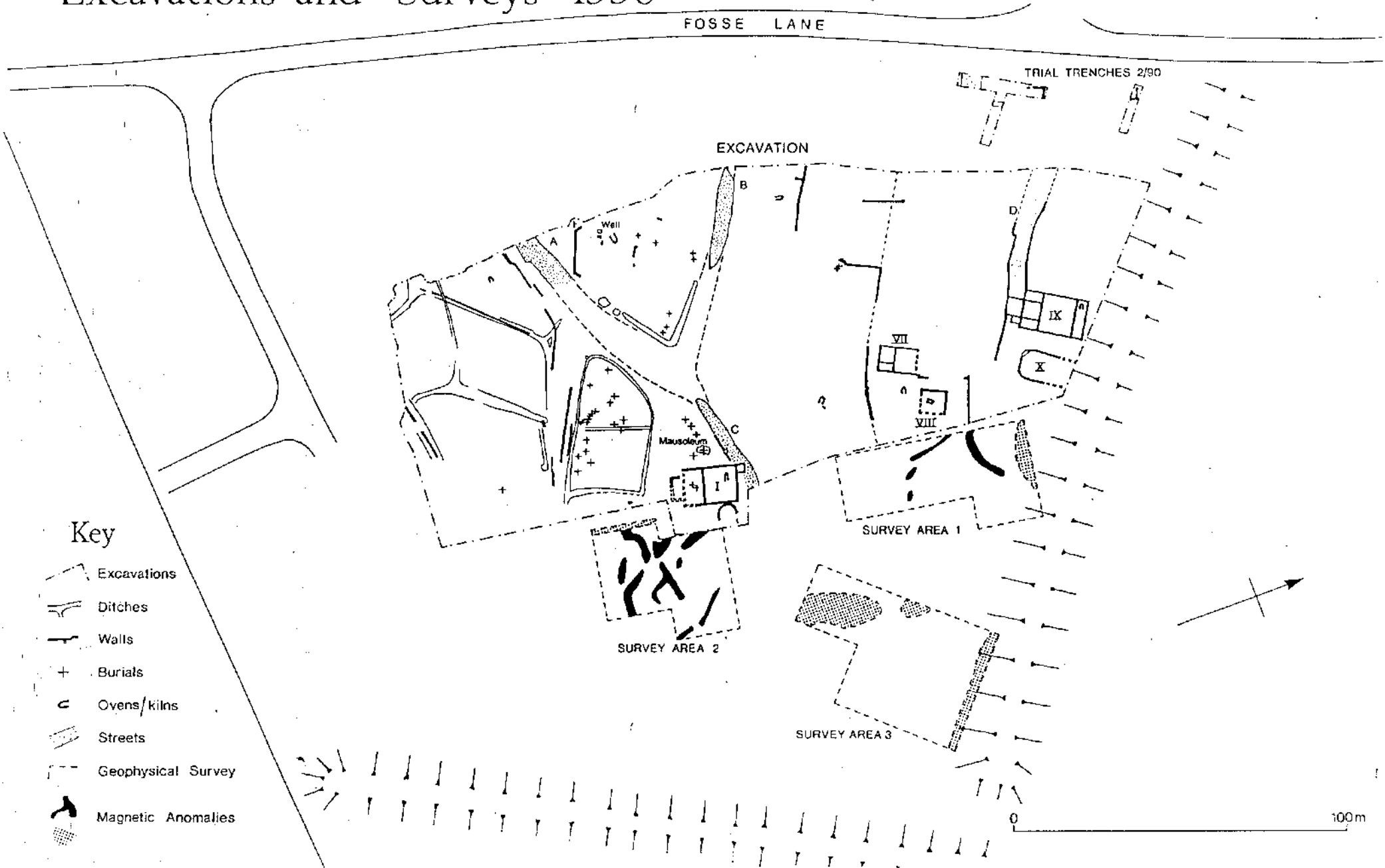


Figure 2

# RELATIVE TO DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

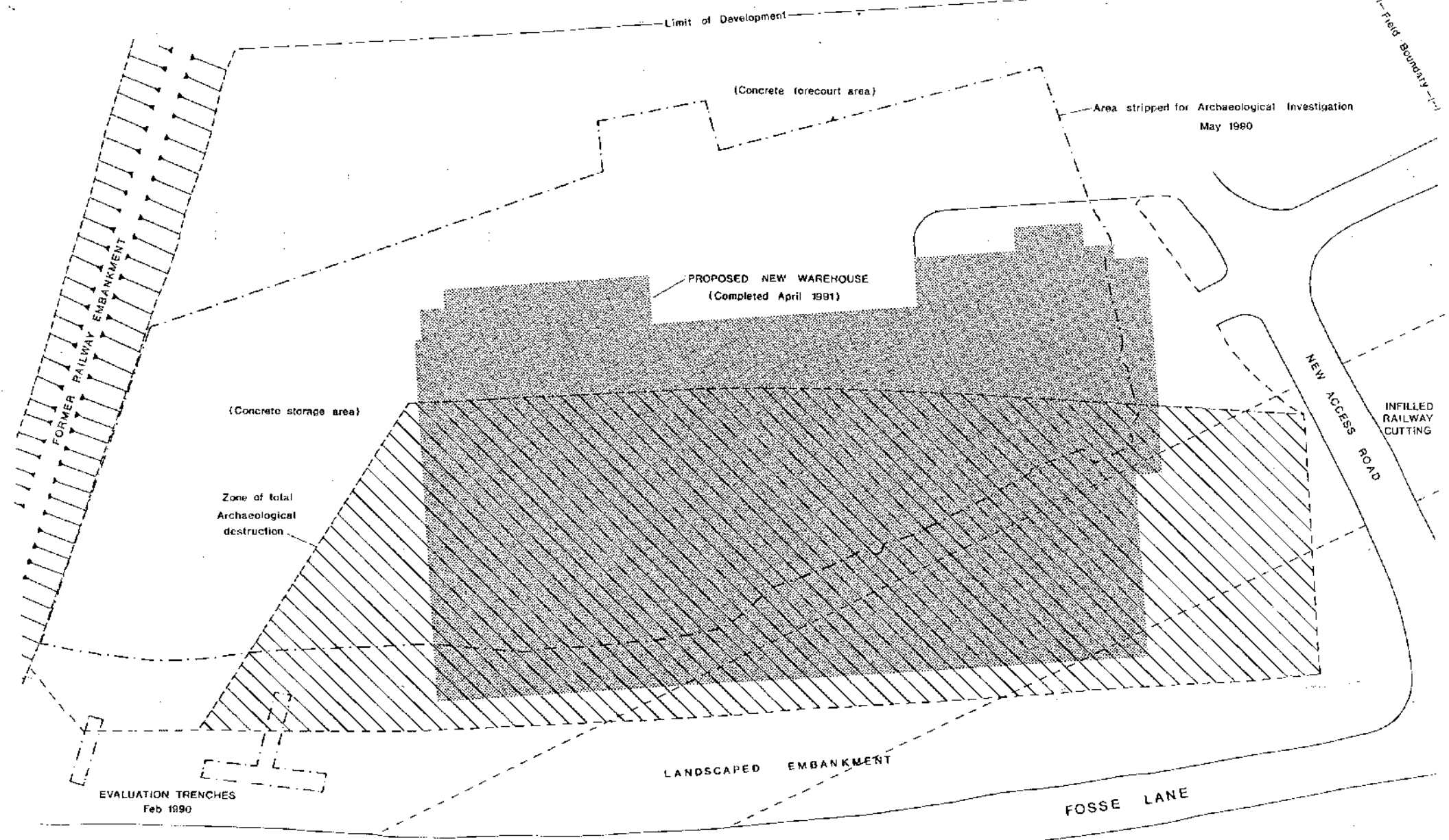


Figure 3



SHEPTON MALLET  
Archaeological Investigations 1990-91



Figure 4