

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**Archaeological Monitoring and Investigation
at
28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester,
Cambridgeshire**

1998

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 538
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by
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1.0 Summary

Archaeological monitoring and investigation was carried out at 28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire during groundworks for residential housing, an associated access road, and service trenches. An earlier archaeological evaluation of the site had identified a well-preserved stratigraphic sequence of features dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods. This sequence was recorded within 0.25m of the present ground surface. Subsequent archaeological monitoring of groundworks ensured that the majority of the surviving archaeological deposits were preserved *in situ*. Deposits and features which were directly affected by groundworks comprised a hearth, gravel surfaces, pits and possible post-hole/gullies. These were dated to the late-1st - early-2nd centuries AD.

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring and investigation carried out during the development of land at 28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire for residential housing (NGR TL 2481 7048). This work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of the sponsors, Gatehouse Estates.

The archaeological monitoring and investigation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the County Archaeology Office of Cambridgeshire County Council (Kaner 1998), and a specification prepared by BUFAU (Mould 1998). The project was carried out in accordance with guidelines set down in *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994), and conformed to requirements set down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1991).

3.0 Site Location and Archaeological Background (Figure 1)

The site is located in the centre of Godmanchester, within the walled Roman town and is located to the west of known 1st-century buildings at 8, New Street (SMR 00856), and 2nd-century buildings, 3rd and 4th-century features at 13, St. Ann's Lane (SMR 01542). Anglo-Saxon pottery and medieval buildings have also been recorded at 13, St. Ann's Lane. Immediately to the southeast of the site, ditches of Roman and medieval date have been identified (at 22, Earning Street).

An archaeological evaluation of the site, comprising the excavation of three trial-trenches, identified a well-preserved stratigraphic sequence of features dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods (Hinman 1997). These features, which included structures, enclosures, domestic rubbish pits and gravel surfaces, were recorded within 0.25m of the present ground surface. A significant quantity of prehistoric and Romano-British artefacts were recovered from the site.

4.0 Objectives

The objective of archaeological monitoring was to ensure that the archaeological remains on site were preserved *in situ*. Archaeological deposits and features which were located within the uppermost 0.30m were to be excavated and *preserved by record*, as were those deposits which were affected by the insertion of services.

Specific research objectives were, for the prehistoric period, to provide an understanding of the nature of activity in the area and to provide an understanding of the prehistoric environment; and, for the Roman period, to contribute to the understanding of the later development and layout of the town, provide data concerning the economy of the town, and small-scale industrial activity, and to contribute towards an understanding of the chronology and processes of the ending of the Roman town.

5.0 Method

The objectives were achieved through the monitoring of contractors' groundworks over a four day period, and by adhering to the conditions set down in the Cambridgeshire County Council Design Brief (Kaner 1998). These limited the depth of the proposed foundations to 0.30m below the present ground surface. The buildings were to be constructed on concrete rafts and laid on a buffer layer of hardcore which was to be sandwiched in between two layers of gauze. This was to seal and protect the archaeological deposits and features.

Topsoil stripping within the building footprints, access routes, service trenches and areas of hard landscaping was monitored by a qualified archaeologist. The new services were originally intended to utilise the existing evaluation Trench 3, at a level above undisturbed archaeological deposits and features. This was not possible, and a new trench (see Section 6.0, Trench 1 below) was excavated to house the services. Three sumps were also cut. All affected archaeological deposits and features were hand-excavated and *preserved by record*.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeological deposits or features were present. Contextual information was supplemented by scale drawings, plans, sections and photographs which, together with recovered artefacts, form the site archive. This is presently housed at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

6.0 Archaeological Results (Figures 2 and 3)

Access Road

With the exception of one length of the access road immediately adjacent to St. Ann's Lane, topsoil stripping of the building footprints and access road was limited to a depth of 0.30m. At the junction with St. Ann's Lane, concrete slabs which were founded on modern levelling deposits were removed from the route of the access road. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 1 (Figures 2 and 3)

(26m x 0.50m, excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m)

This service trench extended southeast from St. Ann's Lane and became more shallow towards the southeastern end of the site. The gravel subsoil was not contacted in Trench 1.

A hearth (F102) was located towards the middle of the trench. It was surrounded by a thin ash and charcoal deposit (1015) and was sealed by an undulating layer of mottled grey-brown sand-clay (1007) which extended over the majority of Trench 1. This layer (1007) was partially overlaid by a light brown, charcoal-flecked, sand-clay deposit which had some grey-green cress inclusions and contained Roman pottery (1006) and partially by a thin deposit of grey sand-clay which had a high percentage of shell inclusions (1014). At the northwestern end of the trench, layer 1006 was truncated by a bowl-shaped pit (F101), filled with a charcoal-flecked brown sand-clay (1008). The pit was sealed by a thin layer of stony, light-brown sand-clay (1004), which also overlaid a grey clay-silt layer (1009) - the latter layer continued southeast for a further 8.50m. A red-brown silt-clay which contained a concentration of gravel and cobble-stones (1003) was cut by a V-shaped pit or gully (F100) to the northwest and by a modern U-shaped pit (F103) further to the southeast.

Within the southeastern half of Trench 1, the charcoal-flecked sand-clay layer (1006) was partially overlaid by the grey clay-silt layer (1009) - both were cut by a small gully or post-hole (F104) which was filled with a dark-brown silt-clay (1016) - partially by a brown silty-clay with shell inclusions (1012) and also by the thin layer of stony, light-brown sand-clay (1004). All of the uppermost layers were sealed by a layer of topsoil (1000), which was itself overlaid in part by a modern sand deposit (1013) towards the southeastern end of Trench 1.

Sump 1

(2.50m x 1.50m, excavated to a depth of 1.20m)

A 0.50m-thick charcoal-flecked, mid-grey sand-silt layer (1051) was overlaid by 0.70m of topsoil (1050) which contained pieces of machine-brick. Both layers were truncated by modern disturbance in the northeast-facing section. The subsoil was not reached in this trench.

Sump 2

(3m x 1.50m, excavated to a depth of 1.20m)

The gravel subsoil (2003) was overlaid by a dark brown silt-clay (2002). This was, in turn, partially overlaid by a thin layer of light-brown sand-silt (2001) and partially by a thick layer of topsoil (2000). The topsoil was extensively disturbed by tree roots.

Sump 3

(2.70m x 1.50m, excavated to a depth of 1.20m)

The yellow gravel subsoil (3002) was overlaid by 0.60m of dark brown silty-clay (3001). This was sealed by 0.60m of topsoil (3000) which included machine-brick fragments in its make-up.

7.0 The Artefacts *by Annette Hancocks*

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from Trench 1 only. The material was quantified by count, with the exception of animal bone which was weighed. Details appear in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Quantification of Artefact Assemblage

Find type	Quantity
Roman pottery	24
Post-medieval pottery	2
Vessel glass (modern)	1
Animal bone	44g
Roman tile	2
Modern tile	3
Coin	1

The pottery was the only diagnostic material recovered, as a single small copper alloy coin was too poorly corroded to identify. The pottery was spot dated using dateable rim form, decoration and fabric to provide a *terminus post quem* of late-1st/early-2nd century AD. Forms identified included a shell-tempered lid-seat globular jar, a Dr. 18/31 base and a triangular-sectioned rim bowl in a Lower Nene Valley greyware fabric. A small quantity of 20th-century material was also recovered from the topsoil layer.

8.0 The Charred Plant Remains *by Andy Hammon*

Samples were taken from sealed and datable deposits at the excavator's discretion. Two samples from the hearth (F102, 1011 and 1015) were selected for assessment in order to determine if plant remains:

- were present.

- would provide any information regarding human activity, in particular cultivation or other agricultural activities.
- would provide information on the surrounding environment.

The samples were processed using water flotation. The flots (the material which floats on the water's surface) were collected on a 500 micron sieve and the heavy residues were washed over a 1mm sieve/mesh. Both fractions were air dried at room temperature and bagged when fully dry. The heavy residues were not examined and the results of this assessment are based entirely on the flots which were scanned by eye. It was not necessary to use a low-powered binocular microscope, as the samples were devoid of anything except modern root material. One or two non-identifiable flecks of charcoal were noted.

9.0 Discussion

As required by the County Council Brief, below-ground intervention was kept to a minimum so as to preserve as much as possible of the surviving archaeology *in situ*. In effect, only a snapshot of the archaeological deposits and features was gained, a relatively small assemblage of artefacts was recovered and interpretation is, inevitably, limited by this small resource. However, comparison with the earlier evaluation results (Hinman 1997), especially those for evaluation Trench 3, allows some conclusions to be drawn. These are presented below.

No prehistoric deposits were identified and no prehistoric artefacts were recovered. Therefore, the research objectives which were specified in Section 4.0 above, could not be met. For the Roman period, the research objectives were to:

- contribute to the understanding of the later development and layout of the town.
- provide data concerning the economy of the town and small-scale industrial activity.
- contribute towards an understanding of the chronology and processes of the ending of the Roman town.

Monitoring suggests that the site may originally have undergone expansion in the late-1st - early-2nd centuries - in line with the branch street frontages elsewhere within Godmanchester and with structural remains previously excavated on St. Ann's Lane and on Earning Street (Burnham and Wacher 1990).

As in the evaluation (Hinman 1997), evidence for possible gullies (F100 and F104), a domestic rubbish pit (F101) and a stone surface (1003) was recorded. In contrast to the evaluation, however, the features were all dated to the late-1st - early-2nd century AD rather than to the secondary expansion of the Roman town in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. The evaluation found pottery from the late-1st - early-2nd century mixed with that of the 3rd and 4th centuries, whilst this stage of monitoring has identified secure deposits and features for this earlier pottery sequence.

No later Saxon remains were identified.

10.0 References

- Burnham, B.C. and Wachter, J. 1990 *The Small Towns of Roman Britain*.
- Hinman, M. 1997 *Prehistoric and Romano-British Remains on Land Adjacent to 28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester*. Cambridgeshire County Council Field Archaeology Unit Report No. A122.
- Kaner, S. 1998 Design Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Investigation at 28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire.
- Mould, C.A. 1998 Archaeological Specification. Archaeological Monitoring and Investigation, 28, St. Ann's Lane, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire.

110 Acknowledgements

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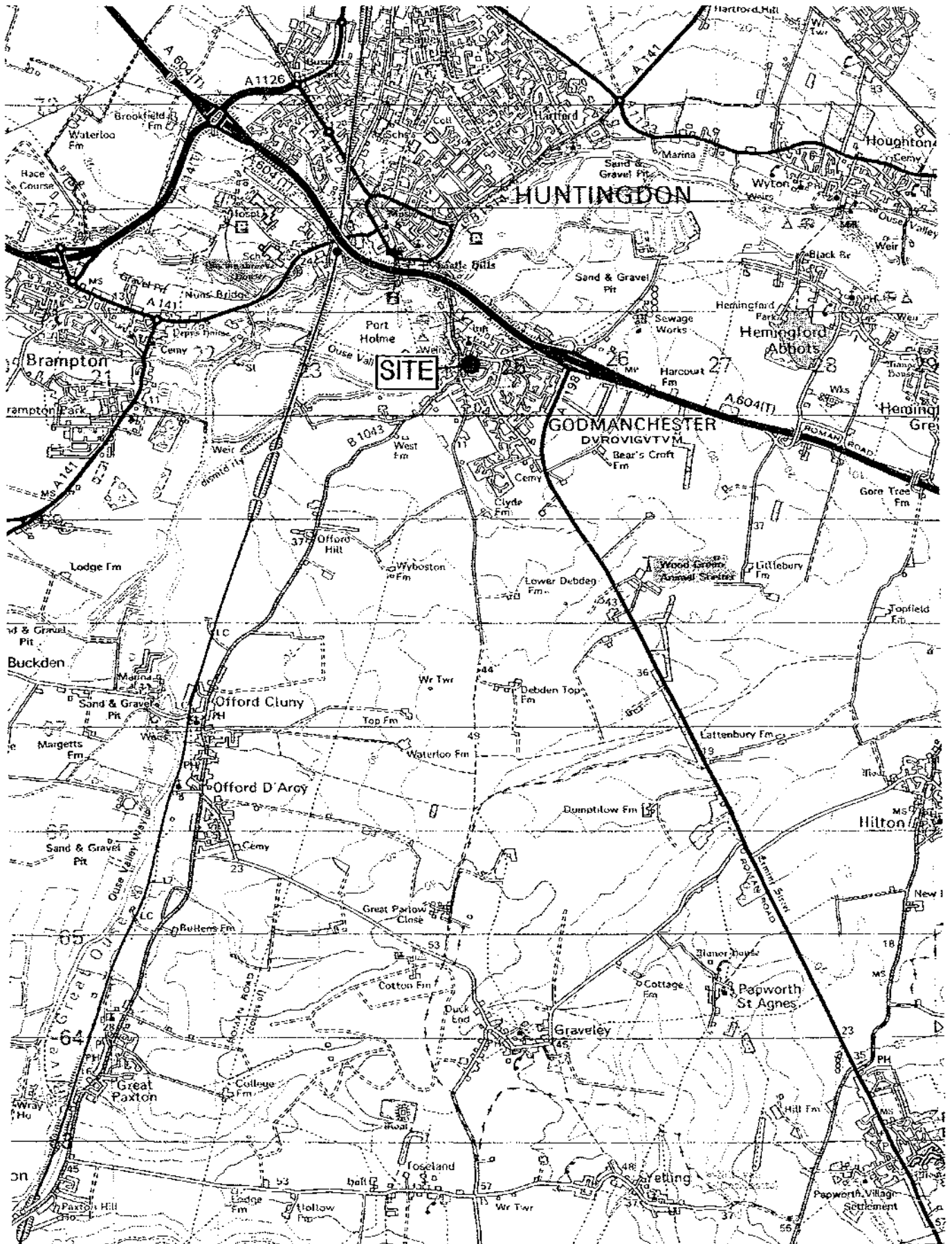
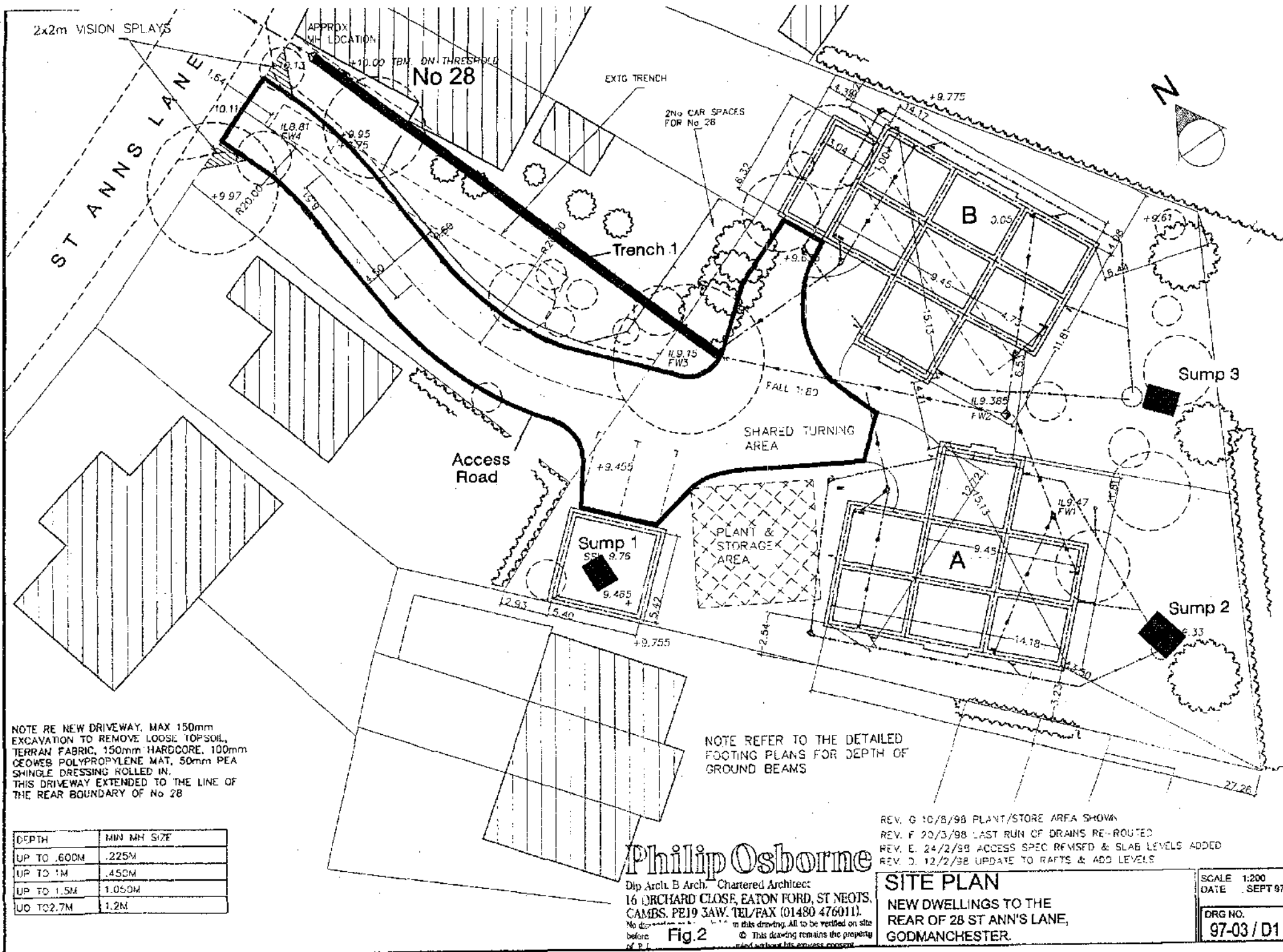


Fig.1

2x2m VISION SPLAYS



NOTE RE NEW DRIVEWAY, MAX 150mm EXCAVATION TO REMOVE LOOSE TOPSOIL, TERRAZO FABRIC, 150mm HARDCORE, 100mm GEOWEB POLYPROPYLENE MAT, 50mm PEA SHINGLE DRESSING ROLLED IN. THIS DRIVEWAY EXTENDED TO THE LINE OF THE REAR BOUNDARY OF No 28

NOTE REFER TO THE DETAILED FOOTING PLANS FOR DEPTH OF GROUND BEAMS

DEPTH	MIN MH SIZE
UP TO .600M	.225M
UP TO 1M	.450M
UP TO 1.5M	1.050M
UP TO 2.7M	1.2M

REV. G 10/8/98 PLANT/STORE AREA SHOWN
 REV. F 20/3/98 LAST RUN OF DRAINS RE-ROUTED
 REV. E 24/2/98 ACCESS SPEC REVISED & SLAB LEVELS ADDED
 REV. D 12/2/98 UPDATE TO RAFTS & ADD LEVELS

Philip Osborne
 Dip Archt. B Arch. Chartered Architect
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 No dis... in this drawing. All to be verified on site before.
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SITE PLAN
 NEW DWELLINGS TO THE REAR OF 28 ST ANN'S LANE, GODMANCHESTER.

SCALE 1:200
 DATE . SEPT 97
 DRG NO. 97-03 / D1

Trench 1

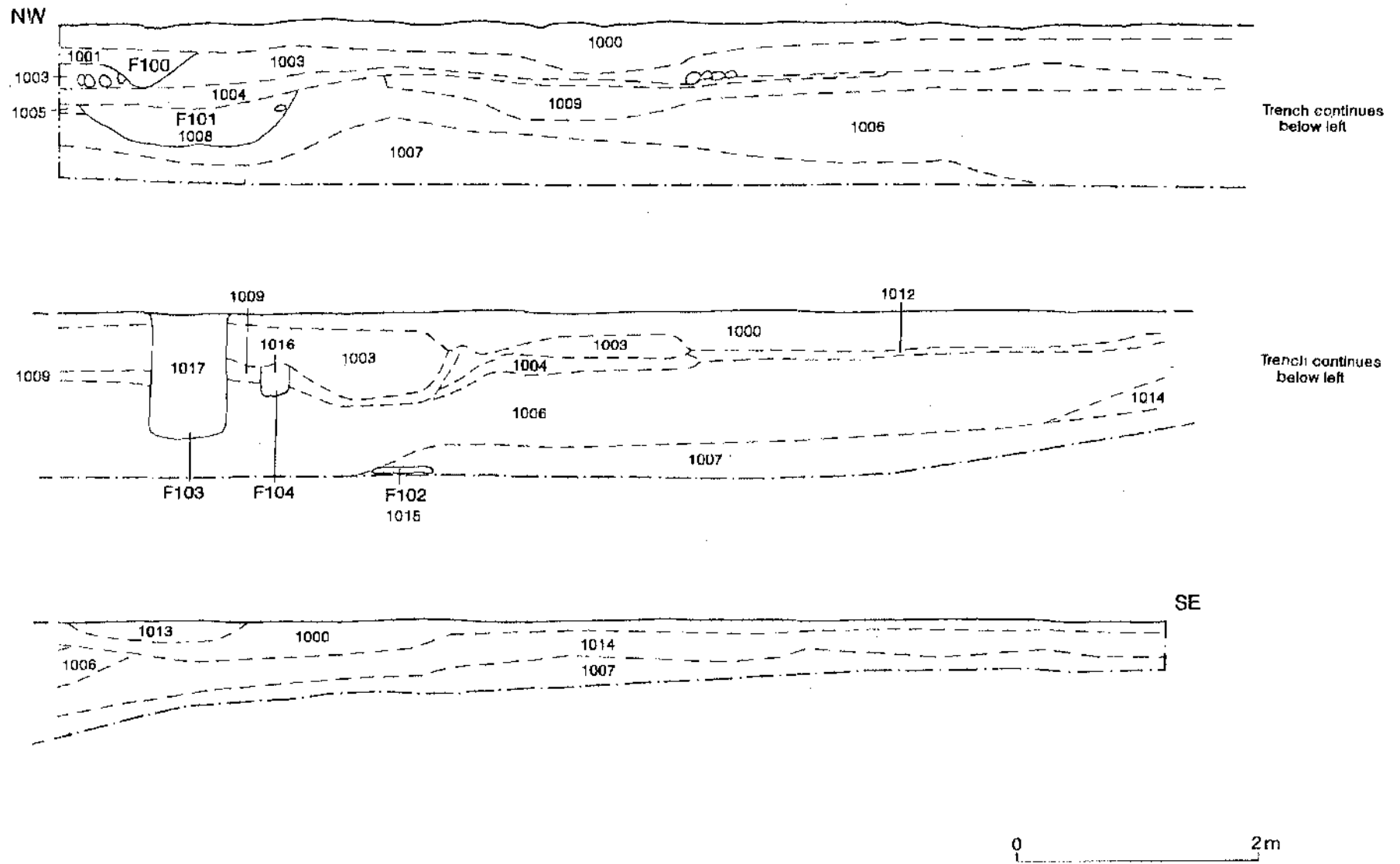


Fig.3