

93.16 198 HIGH STREET 1975

(Roman Military)

**EXCAVATIONS AT 198 HIGH STREET,
EXETER, 1975
PART 1: ROMAN MILITARY**

by
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Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit

Report No. 93.16

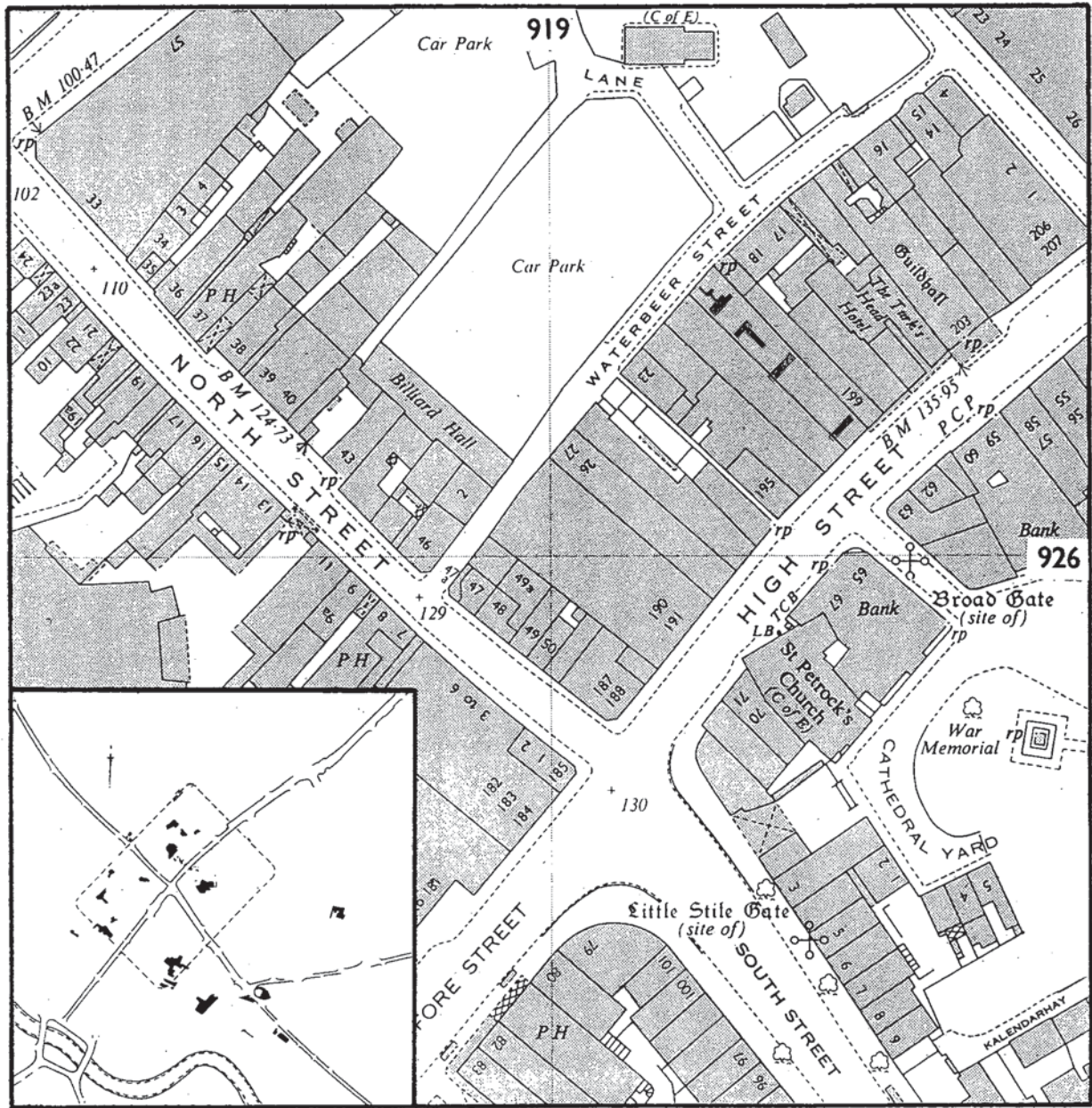


Fig. 1 The location of the 198 High Street excavations Exeter 1975. The inset shows the approximate position of the site within the fortress.

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SECTION 1

1 Introduction

In 1975 the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU) undertook excavation within the cellars of No. 198 High Street. The site was directed by C.G. Henderson and was supervised by S.W. Brown. The post-excavation work for this research archive report was undertaken in 1992 by J.B. Bedford and J.P. Salvatore.

1.1 The organisation of this report

The report comprises two sections. Section 1 includes a site narrative which summarises the results of the excavations at 198 High Street for the Roman military period. The narrative is an interpretive and stratigraphic account based upon the discussion of the archaeological records found in Section 2.

Section 2 contains the detailed archaeological evidence for the stratigraphic development of the site during the Roman military period. The excavation records are presented in a processed form using matrices and groups with standardised descriptions of individual contexts.

1.2 The site (Fig.1)

The site was situated at Nos. 198 High Street Exeter at SX 9196/9263. The site is within the known area of the former Roman legionary fortress at Exeter.

1.3 Method of excavation

Excavation was by the open-area method within the total of four small trenches which were available for inspection. Trench h was just over 5m in length by 1m in width and was close to the modern High Street frontage; trench g was 5.6m in length by 1.3m in width; trench f was just under 4m in length and just over 1m in width with a further trench 1m wide and 4.5 in length adjoining its south-eastern edge; these two trenches were in the centre of the building. A further trench at the rear of 198 High Street, trench e, which was heavily truncated and cut by later activity, produced only fragmentary evidence for the Roman military.

1.4 Excavation summary

Pits and other below ground-surface features of the Post-medieval, the Medieval and the Roman civil periods were recorded cutting the deposits of the Roman military period which at Exeter is dated from c.AD 55/60 - c.75/80. The remains of a water-pipe trench of Roman military date was recorded along with some stakeholes.

1.5 Post-excavation applications

In the compilation of the site narrative the

interpretations reached follow closely those based on Henderson (unpublished archive material) which were constructed shortly after excavation.

1.6 Site narrative: Roman military

Information was recovered from four excavation trenches located at various points throughout the length of the tenement at 198 High Street. The most significant discovery from the Roman military period was the remains of a wide trench (c. 1.1m) which, from the observation of a narrow and semi-circular indentation running along its centre, must have once carried a water-pipe which no longer survived (Fig. 2). The diameter of this pipe from observations made in trench g would not have exceeded 0.12m.

The water-pipe trench was observed in three separate excavation trenches (h, g and f) running almost parallel to the wall which marked the tenement division between 198 and 197 High Street. The pipe-trench was therefore on a north-west/south-east alignment which was consistent with the Roman military alignment. It would almost certainly have been located in trench e had that area not suffered damage from later activity. What may be assumed to have been a minor branch of the pipe was noted in the south-east of trench e; this was perhaps unlikely to have been the main pipe as it was askew from the line of the trench seen elsewhere and was apparently lacking the wide carrying trench. A further minor branch may have sprung from the water-pipe in a north-easterly direction from a point observed in trench h.

Part of the same water-pipe system was located at the Trichay Street site where the water-pipe was observed to have run in front of the *fabrica*. There it could be seen that the pipe itself was of wood, the adjoining lengths being supported by iron junction collars (Henderson, Salvatore and Earwood 1993).

The pipe seen at 198 High Street was almost certainly a major branch taken from the main supply which entered the fortress by way of the aqueduct identified as having run along the south-east side of the *via decumana* (Bedford and Salvatore 1993a). Excavation which took place at the National Westminster Bank in 1977 located the main junction box of several water-pipe trenches on the north-western side of the *via decumana* which was presumably served by the aqueduct (Bidwell, 1979, 60; Fig. 14).^{*} The system may have operated in one of several ways. The employment of such systems in the Roman period is described by Hodge (1992,215-45).

^{*} Note that the orientation of the fortress in Bidwell (1979) was subsequently reversed (see Henderson 1988, 94-95). Thus the *via praetoria* referred to by Bidwell is in fact the *via decumana*.

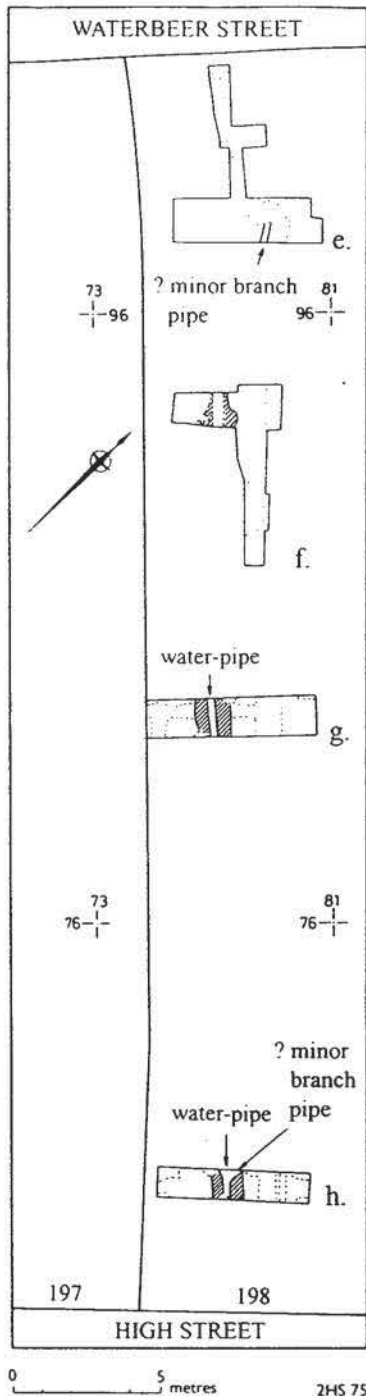


Fig. 2 A composite plan of the course of the water-pipe trench. Scale 1:250

Bidwell noted that one of the water-pipes (F25) at the National Westminster site aligned exactly with the water-pipe seen at 198 High Street which ran along the north-eastern side of the granaries (*ibid.*, 60). If this is correct then it is reasonable to assume that the water-pipe trench observed at 198 High Street had at one time carried water in a pipe from the main supply for use in the metalworking processes conducted in the *fabrica*. Bidwell (*ibid.*, 60) suggested that the water-pipe was laid late in the military period. Sufficient depth of

deposits survived in trenches e-h to show that there was no gravel metalling to the north-east of the water-pipe. This suggests that the granaries which were identified in 196-97 High Street were indeed aligned *per scamna* with their loading bays probably at the north-western end of their extent (Bedford and Salvatore 1993b, 2). Also seen during excavation were a number of stakeholes. These were nearly all smaller in diameter than those observed in 197 High Street (Henderson pers. comm.) although the greater number of them occurred to the south-west of the water-pipe trench in a position quite close to those post-holes which were identified as having held posts for a series of raised floors of a granary (Bedford and Salvatore 1993b). However, the smaller size of the stakeholes seen in 198 High Street perhaps precludes them from consideration as driven piles able to support a wooden floor and its load. The stakeholes clearly belonged to different periods, some pre-dating and some post-dating the water-pipe trench. Their purpose remains unknown.

1.7 Conclusions

The excavations at 198 High Street were of some importance in demonstrating the sophistication of the Roman military water supply. The relationship of the site to the fortress as a whole will be discussed in a future Exeter Archaeological Report (Salvatore and Henderson forthcoming).

Acknowledgements

The plans in this report were drawn by T. Ives and were photographed for reduction by G. Young. The matrices were produced by A.G. Collings who also typed Section 2 of the text.

Bibliography

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- Henderson C.G. 1988 'Exeter (*Isca Dumnoniorum*)' in Webster G. (ed.) *Fortress into City: The consolidation of Roman Britain, first century AD*, 91-119.
- Henderson C.G., Salvatore J.P. and Earwood C. 1993 *Excavations at Trichay Street, Exeter, 1972-73 Part 1: Roman military*, report of the EMAFU: 93.35.
- Hodge A.T. 1992 *Roman Aqueducts and Water Supply*.
- Salvatore J.P. and Henderson C.G. forthcoming *The Roman Legionary Fortress at Exeter*, Exeter Archaeological Reports.

SECTION 2

2 Introduction

This section of the report contains a record of the detailed archaeological evidence upon which the narrative produced in Section 1 is based. The stratigraphic sequence is presented in the form of a context matrix. The matrix has been produced according to a series of stratigraphic groups and sub-groups which illustrate events and stages in the archaeological record. Individual contexts are described in a standardised form in numerical order.

2.1 Context matrix identification

Only one context matrix has been produced for the site. The group number is located on the left hand side of the matrix diagram immediately below the horizontal line that defines its limit. The sub-group number is found immediately to the left hand side of the contexts which form the sub-group.

2.2 Group identification

The Roman military contexts for the 198 High Street site have been divided into six groups. Each group represents an archaeological event or a group of contexts which have some association. The nature of each group is given in the group discussions, this section includes the interpretational conclusions which can be drawn from a consideration of the stratigraphic and other evidence.

Stratigraphic relationships between the groups are illustrated by the group matrix.

2.3 Context information

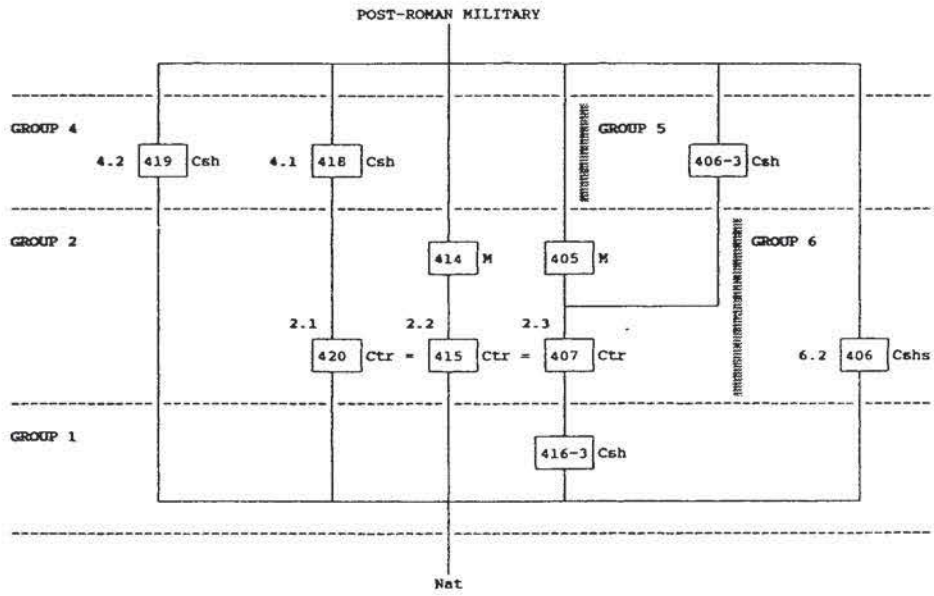
Information about individual contexts is provided in two forms. Firstly, the context number as it appears in the context matrix is annotated with an abbreviated 'type' description (e.g. Csh = Cut, stakehole). The list of abbreviations is given at the beginning of the matrix diagram. These abbreviations are also used in the general context index. Secondly, a standardised summary description of each context in numerical order is included in the report.

2.4 The matrix diagrams and group discussions.

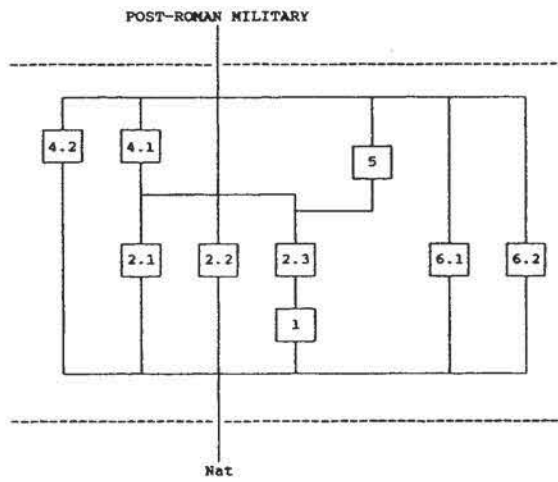
List of abbreviations (for matrices).

Cut	C
Fill	F
Layer	L
Surface	S
Miscellaneous	M
Natural	nat
Stakehole	sh
Trench	tr

MATRIX I TRENCHES f, g, h



GROUP MATRIX



GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group 1

A stakehole in trench g cut by water-pipe trench 407 (see Group 2) and thus earlier than it.
Contains context: 416-(3)

Group 2 (for simplified plan see Fig. 3)

This group concerns the evidence for the military water-pipe found in trenches f,g,h. The excavations here exposed very few military features and very little stratigraphy. However, the remains of a water-pipe trench (407) aligned NW-SE were located. The trench itself was about 1.5m wide and was observed over a distance of about 26.5m. The position of the pipe itself was inferred from a noticeable straight-edged slot in the bottom of the pipe-trench which had been dug to contain it. This pipe would presumably have run outside the north-eastern limit of the granary buildings that were recorded in 196-7 High Street (Bedford and Salvatore 1993).

Contains sub-groups 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

Sub-group 2.1

This sub-group is for the elements of the water-pipe trench found in excavation trench f. This consisted of evidence of only the carrying trench (420) which had been badly disturbed by later features.

Contains contexts: 420

Sub-group 2.2

This sub-group is for the elements of the water-pipe trench found in excavation trench g. This consisted of both the carrying trench and the channel for the pipe itself. The carrying trench (415) was found to be 0.3m deep although it may have been somewhat truncated. The channel for the pipe (414) was located just off-centre of the trench being closer to the southwestern edge. The channel was 0.16m wide and 0.26m deep. See section 1 on Fig. 4.

Contains contexts: 414, 415

Sub-group 2.3

This sub-group is for the elements of the water-pipe trench found in excavation trench h. This consisted of both the carrying trench and the channel for the pipe itself. The carrying trench (407) was found to be between 0.2 and 0.24m deep but it may have suffered from truncation. The channel for the pipe (405) was located just off-centre of the trench being closer to the southwestern edge. The channel was 0.17m deep and showed evidence of a possible minor branch to the north-east.

Contains contexts: 405, 407

Group 3

Evidence of a slot for a water-pipe was seen in trench e. The apparent absence of a carrying trench and its alignment, which was at an angle to the main water-pipe trench seen elsewhere (see Group 2), suggest the possibility that this may have been the trench for a minor

pipe.

Contains context: 417

Group 4

Two stakeholes of unknown date (in trench f) which may or may not be associated.

Contains sub-groups 4.1, 4.2

Sub-group 4.1

Stake-hole (418) was observed to have cut water-pipe trench 420.

Contains context: 418

Sub-group 4.2

Stake-hole (419) was located to the north-east of water-pipe trench 420.

Group 5

Stake-hole (406-3) was observed to have cut water-pipe trench 407.

Contains context: 406-3

Group 6

This group is for the stakeholes found in trenches g and h. These consisted of a mass of stakeholes all of which were observed to have cut the natural ground surface. It was impossible to discern which of them might be contemporary or indeed whether they were all of the same date.

Contains sub-groups 6.1, 6.2

Sub-group 6.1

This sub-group is for the stakeholes of unknown date found in trench g of which there were two (416-1; 416-2). These were located cutting natural to the south-east of water-pipe trench (415).

Contains contexts: 416-1, 416-2

Sub-group 6.2

Group of stakeholes cutting natural in trench h. Of unknown date. They were found principally to the south-west of the water-pipe trench (407), only two being to the north-east.

Contains generic context: 406

GROUP MATRIX INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Matrix</i>
405	2.3	1
406-3	5	1
407	2.3	1
414	2.2	1
415	2.2	1
416-1	6.1	1
416-2	6.1	1

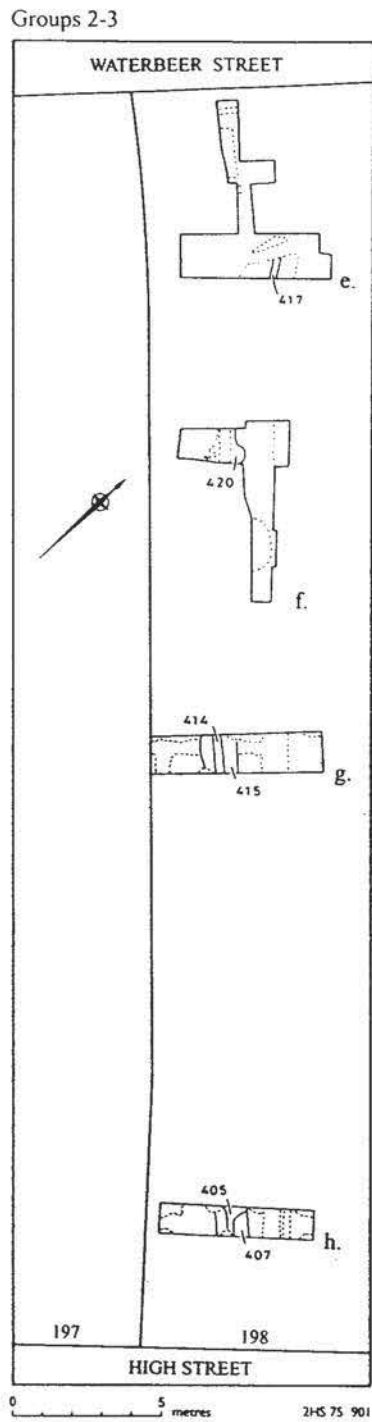


Fig. 3 Simplified plan of Groups 2-3 shown by reference to context. Scale 1:200.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Matrix</i>
416-3	1	1
417	3	-
418	4.1	1
419	4.2	1
420	2.1	1
<i>Generic</i>		
<i>Context</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Matrix</i>
406	6.2	1

2.5 The context descriptions and main indices

Additional abbreviations for contexts.

Length	Le
Depth	D
Width	Wth
Diameter	Diam
North	N
Occasional	Occ
South	S
East	E
West	W

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

405 Pipe-cavity in centre of 407, where water-pipe once ran, aligned NW-SE (trench h). Fill: dark orange-brown very gritty clay, very loose and crumbly with lumps of bright orange clay, volcanic chips, charcoal flecks, thin spread of pea-grit, occ waterworn pebble. Le = as 407, Wth = 0.25m, D = 0.15m.

406 Generic no. for stakeholes found in trench h.

Massed group of stakeholes. All were sealed by a Roman civil layer and cut natural with the exception of 406-3 which cut 407.

406-1: D = 0.07m, Diam = 0.07m; 406-2: D = 0.08m, Diam = 0.07m; 406-3: D = 0.08m, Diam = 0.08m; 406-4: D = 0.09m+ unbottomed; 406-5: D = 0.12m+ unbottomed, Diam = 0.09m; 406-6: D = 0.05m, Diam = 0.07m; 406-7: D = 0.04m, Diam = 0.05m; 406-8: D = 0.07m, Diam = 0.07m; 406-9: D = 0.05m, Diam = 0.05m; 406-10: D = 0.04m, Diam = 0.05m; 406-11: D = 0.05m, Diam = 0.06m; 406-12: D = 0.06m, Diam = 0.06m; 406-13: D = 0.1m, Diam = 0.08m. 406-14: D = 0.11m, Diam = 0.07m.

407 Water-pipe trench (as seen in trench h). Fill: hard-packed, stoney, orange-brown clay with volcanic chips and charcoal flecks. Overall length as observed through trenches f, g, and h = 10.5m, Wth = 1.0m, D = 0.3m (truncated).

414 Pipe-cavity in water-pipe trench (as seen in trench g).

414-1 Upper fill: mixed orange-brown, yellow-brown and mid-brown clay, stoney with volcanic chips, thin spread of pea-grit, charcoal flecks and occ. waterworn pebbles.

414-2 Lower fill: Very soft, crumbly, mid-orange-brown clay with charcoal flecks pea-grit and iron-panning. D = 0.2m.

415 Water-pipe trench (as seen in trench g). Fill: mixed mid-brown and yellow clays with water worn pebbles, volcanic chips, occ charcoal flecks and some pea-grit. D = 0.3m.

416 Group of three stakeholes two to the SW of 415 and one (416-3) cut by 415 along its NE edge. All in trench g. All filled with mid orange-brown gravel and grit.

416-1 D = 0.08m; 416-2 D = 0.09m; 416-3 D = 0.12m.

417 ?pipe cavity (trench e). Fill: brown sandy clay with gravel and iron panning. Occ. orange clay fleck. D = 0.2m.

418-9 Two isolated stakeholes in trench f, possibly aligned. Could be Roman military. 418 cuts 420. Fill of 418: dark orange-brown gravel and clay. D = 0.07m. Fill of 419: brown gravel. D = 0.16m.

420 Water-pipe trench (as seen in trench f). Fill: orange-brown gravel and clay with volcanic chips, waterworn pebbles and infrequent charcoal flecks

GENERAL CONTEXT INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Trench</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Plan</i>
405	h	M	801
407	h	M	801
414	g	C	801
415	g	C	801
416-1	g	C	801
416-2	g	C	801
416-3	g	C	801
417	e	C	-
418	f	C	801
419	f	C	801
420	f	C	801

Generic context

406	h	Gen	801
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ARCHIVE SECTION INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Sheet</i>	<i>Location</i>
414-1	1	801	801
414-2	1	801	801
415	1	801	801

EXETER: 198 HIGH STREET

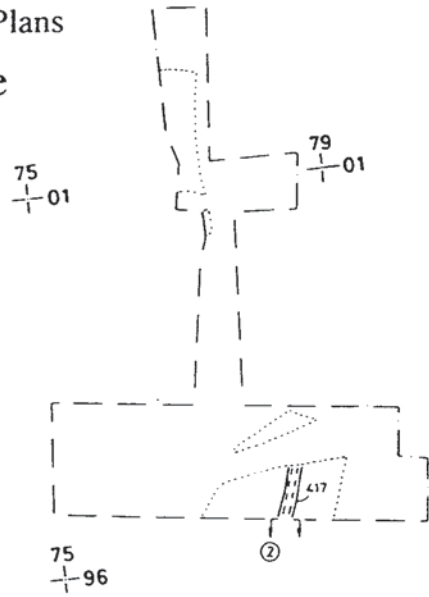
801

Roman military

6

Plans

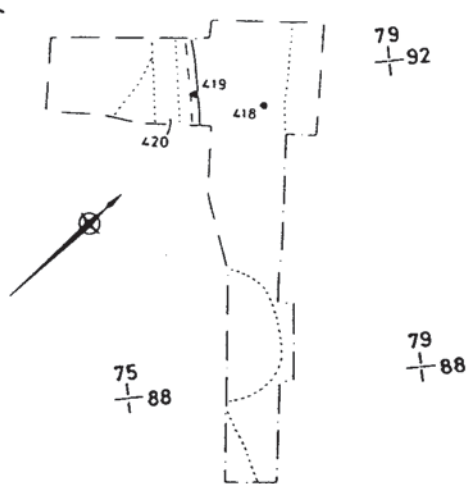
e



Section 2



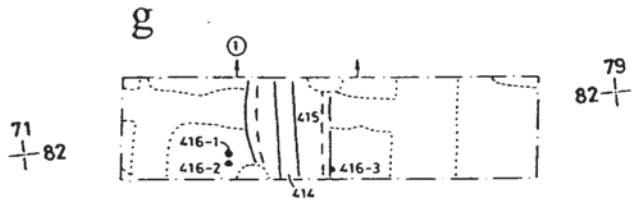
f



Section 1



g



0 2 metres

h

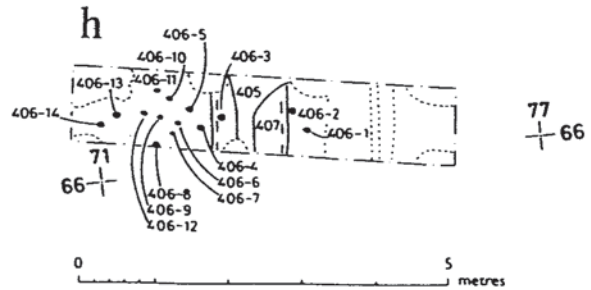


Fig. 4 Plan and sections through the Roman military remains at 198 High Street. Scale 1:100