

93.22 UPPER PAUL STREET 1986 
(Roman Military)

**EXCAVATIONS AT UPPER PAUL STREET,
EXETER, 1986**

by
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Report No. 93.22

CONTENTS

Section 1

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Organisation of this report	1
1.2	The site	1
1.3	Method of excavation	1
1.4	Excavation summary	1
1.5	Site narrative: Roman military	1
1.6	Conclusions	1
	Acknowledgements	1
	Bibliography	1

Section 2

2	Introduction	3
2.1	Group and sub-group identification	3
2.2	Context information	3
2.3	The group discussions and sub-group descriptions	3
2.4	The context descriptions and main indices	
	Context descriptions	3
	General context index	3

List of illustrations

Fig. 1	The location of the Upper Paul Street excavations 1986	overleaf
Fig. 2	A composite plan of the Roman military features at Upper Paul Street in relation to those at Paul Street. Scale 1:1250	2
Fig. 3	Plan of the Roman military remains (801). Scale 1:100	4

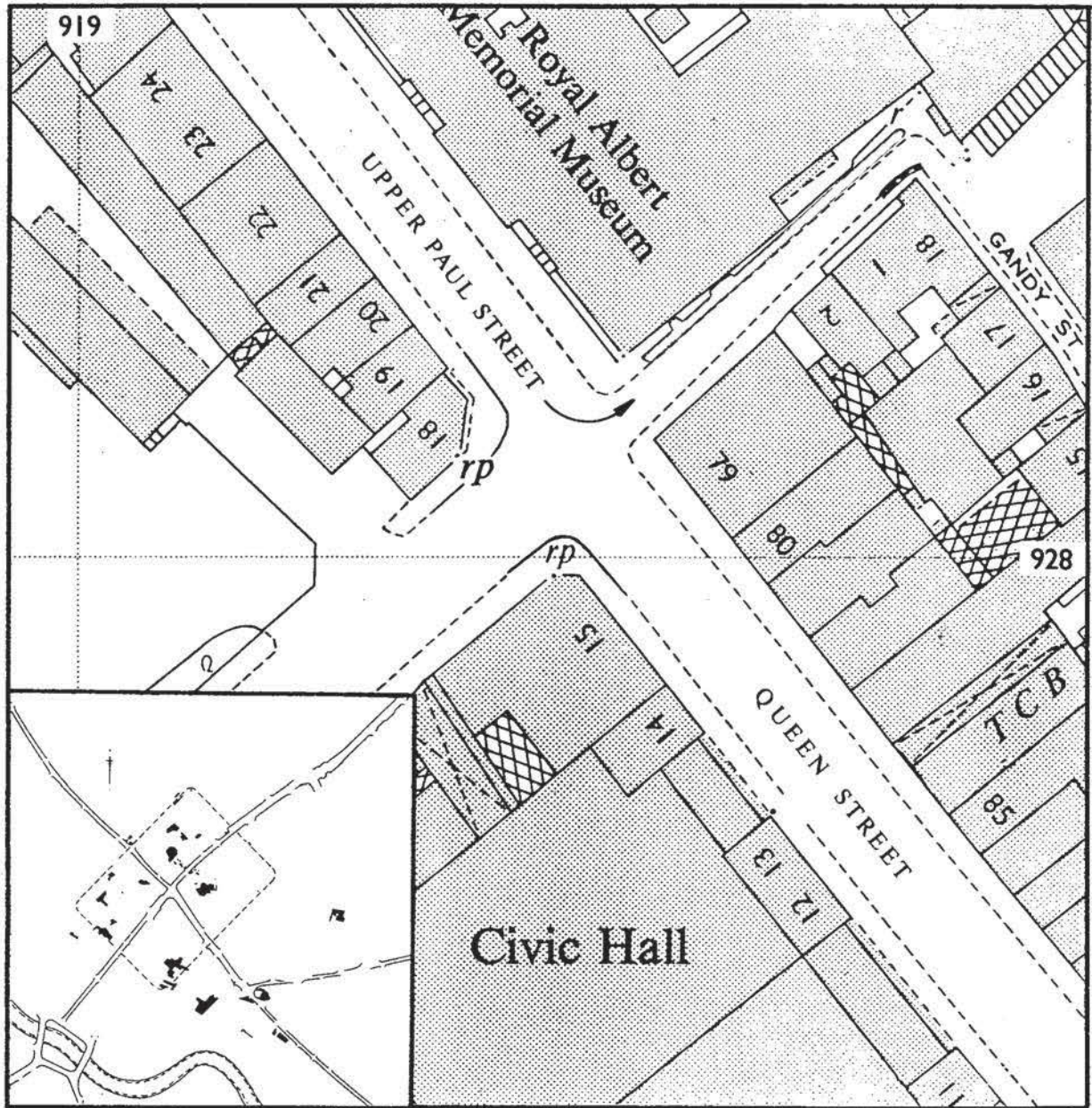


Fig. 1 The location of the Upper Paul Street excavations Exeter 1986 showing the two trenches A and B. The inset shows the approximate position of the site on the fortress defences.

SECTION 1

1 Introduction

In May 1986 the Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU) undertook a watching brief and short term excavation in Upper Paul Street Exeter in advance of the repaving of the street with granite sets. The excavation was funded by Exeter City Council and was directed by C.G. Henderson. The watching brief and limited excavation was carried out by M. Hall and P. Stead and was supervised by N. Holbrook. 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 provides a background to the observations together with a site narrative for the Roman military period. This places the discovery at Upper Paul Street into context.

Section 2 includes the archaeological evidence upon which the site narrative is based.

1.2 The site (Fig.1)

The site consisted of two parallel trenches (A and B) situated in Upper Paul Street Exeter at SX 9198 9284. The site is on the defences of the former Roman legionary fortress at Exeter. Fig. 1 gives the location of the excavation trenches.

1.3 Method of excavation

Excavation was restricted to the emptying out, within the narrow area available in both trench A and trench B, of the infills of a recognised Roman feature.

1.4 Excavation summary

Deposits within the inner (first) ditch of the legionary fortress were recognised along with a truncated top edge of the ditch. These deposits were of the Roman military period which at Exeter is dated from c.AD 55/60 - c.75/80.

1.5 Site narrative: Roman military

The two excavation trenches in Upper Paul Street lay parallel with the north-western stretch of the legionary defences. However, at the north-eastern end of both trenches, close to the junction with Gandy Street, a Roman feature was located. This feature was clearly aligned north-west/south-east and was thus at right angles to the fortress defences seen in Paul Street (Bedford and Salvatore 1993a). Upon further investigation the feature was found to be a very truncated section of the north-eastern circuit of the first fortress ditch. It is clear from this observation, and from the evidence of the same ditch located at Paul Street, that the section of ditch seen at Upper Paul Street must have lain very close to the north-western corner of the fortress defences (see Fig 2). Significant was the fact that the ditch had at this point been cut into volcanic bedrock a much harder medium than is encountered elsewhere on the fortress defences. This may have had implications for the depth of the ditch. In addition, the normal rill seen at the base of the ditch (cf. Bedford and Salvatore 1993b, Fig. 3), was not seen, presumably due to the resistant nature of the bedrock.

1.6 Conclusions

The observations at Upper Paul Street were significant in providing enough information for the north-western corner of the fortress defences to be established with reasonable accuracy. This enabled the size of the fortress to be estimated at 16.6ha (Henderson 1988, 95).

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. Pottery information was provided by G. Langman.

Bibliography

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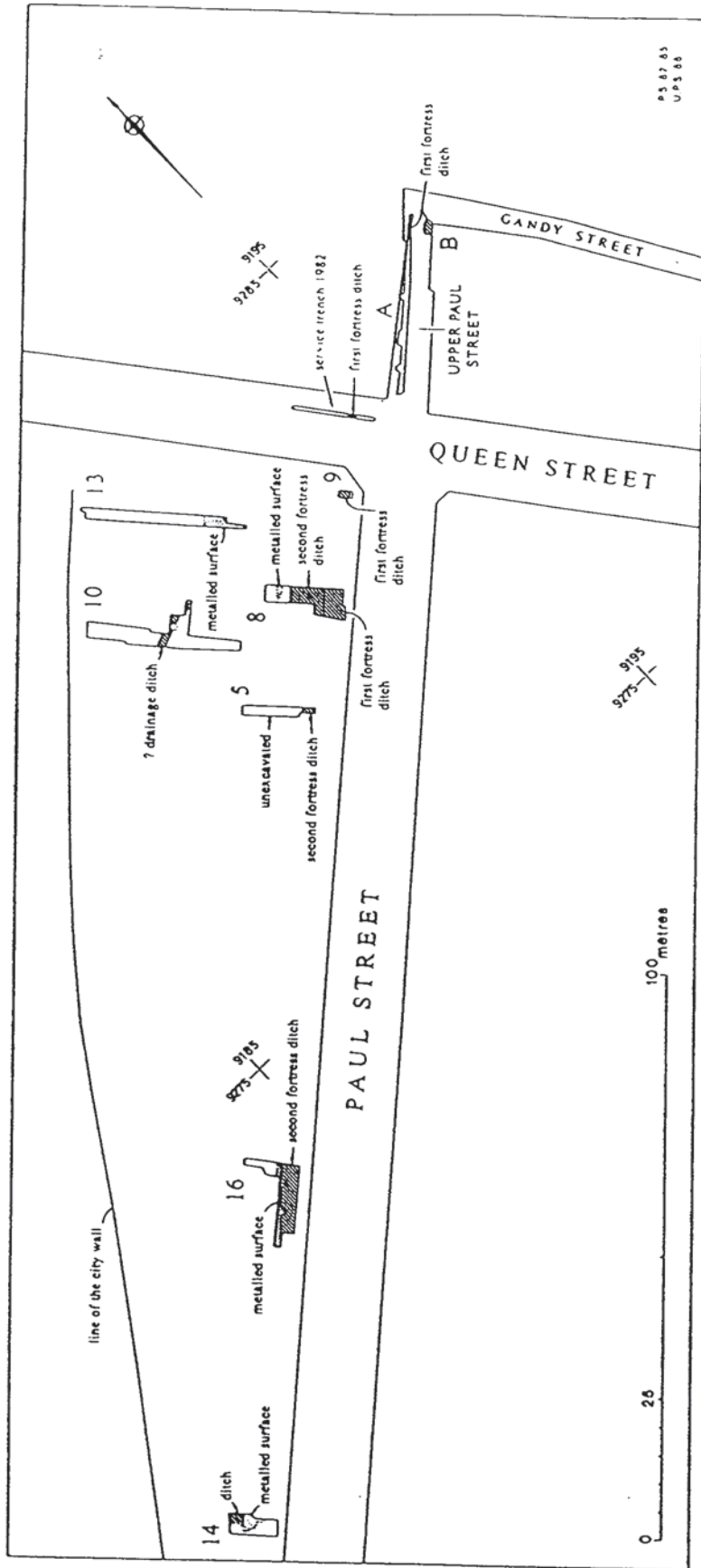


Fig. 2 The location of the Upper Paul Street trenches A and B showing evidence for the first fortress ditch in relation to the observations of the same ditch made in Paul Street.

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. Individual contexts are described in a standardised form in numerical order.

2.1 Group and sub-group identification

The Roman military contexts for the Upper Paul Street fall naturally into just one group. This group has been divided with a sub-grouping created for both the ditch cut and its infill.

2.2 Context information

A standardised summary description of each context in numerical order is included in the report.

2.3 The group discussion and sub-group descriptions

Group 1

This group encompasses the ditch that was located in two trenches at Upper Paul Street. In trench A the ditch was seen to be 1.5m wide in its truncated state with a maximum depth of 0.82m. In trench B the ditch was recorded with a maximum width of 1.6m. It is believed that the ditch observed was part of the legionary defences, this being the first fortress ditch.

Contains sub-groups: 1.1, 1.2.

Sub-group 1.1

This sub-group is for the cut of the ditch only.

Contains context: 1.

Sub-group 1.2

This sub-group is for the fills of the ditch that were recorded in both trenches A and B. Only two layers were observed. It was significant that the upper fill (3) was found to contain what may have been turf cuttings.

Contains contexts: 2, 3.

2.4 The context descriptions and context index

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

- 1 Cut for ditch. Width of cut in trench 1 was 1.5m; width of cut in trench A was 1.6m. Maximum depth 0.82m in trench 1, approximately 1.08m in trench B.
- 2 Fill of ditch 1. Fine, purple-brown, silty loam with occ. pieces of volcanic stone.
- 3 Fill of ditch 1. Fine, yellow clay with flecks of organic material perhaps derived from turf. Depth 0.18m. Produced *mortarium* shard dated to AD 50-85.

GENERAL CONTEXT INDEX

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Plan</i>
1	Cut	801
2	Fill	801
3	Fill	801

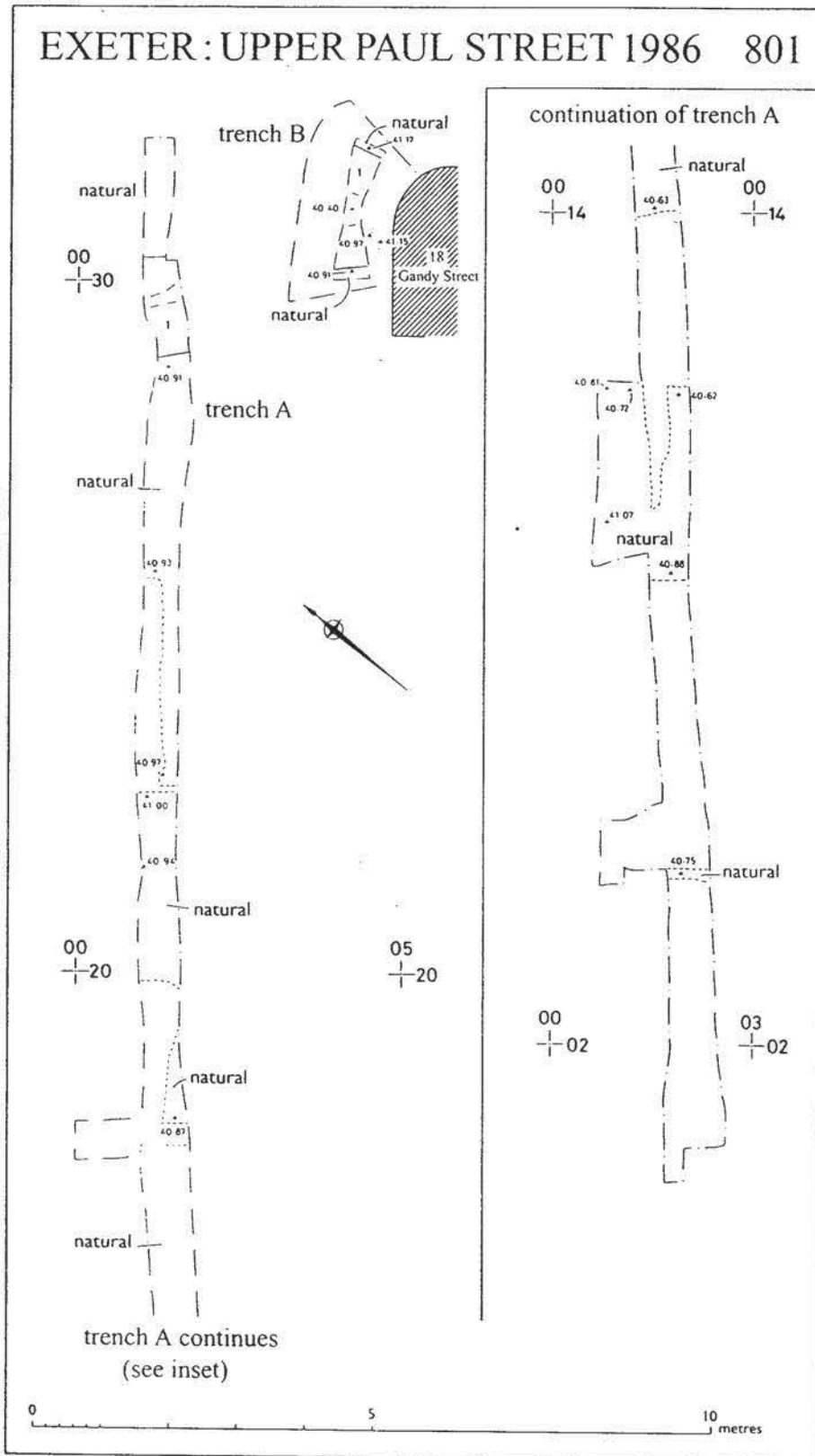


Fig. 3 Plan of the Roman military remains: context 1. Scale 1:100