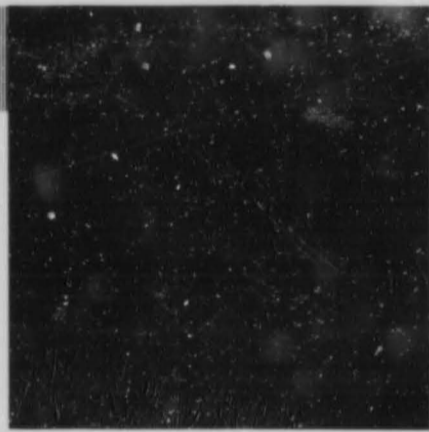
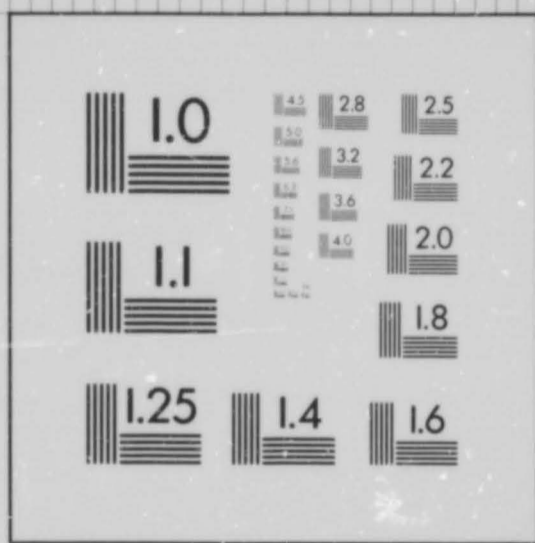


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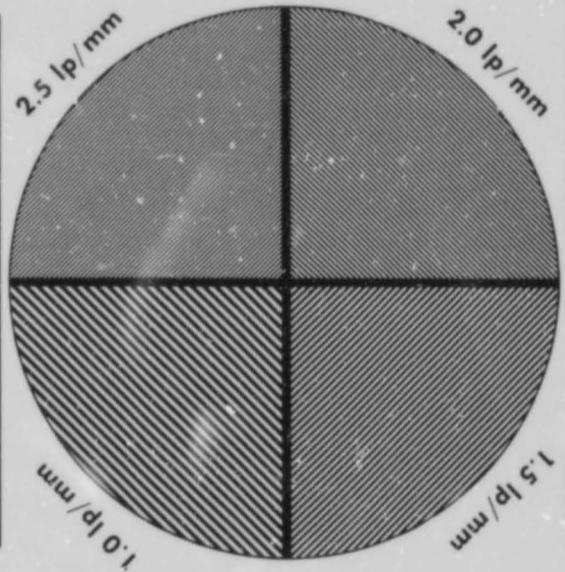
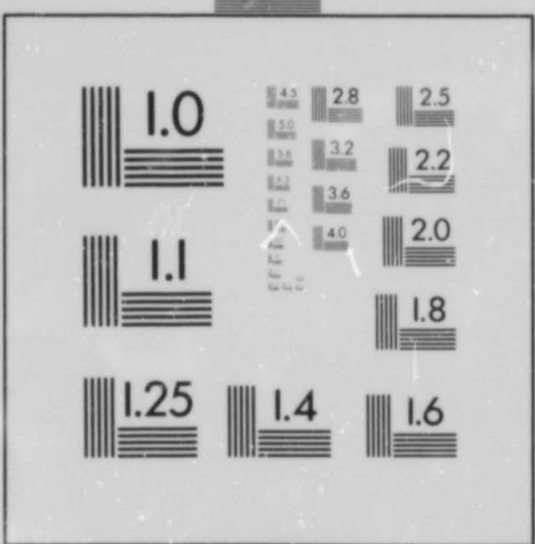
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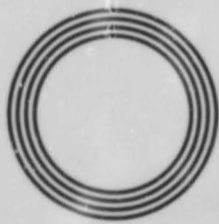
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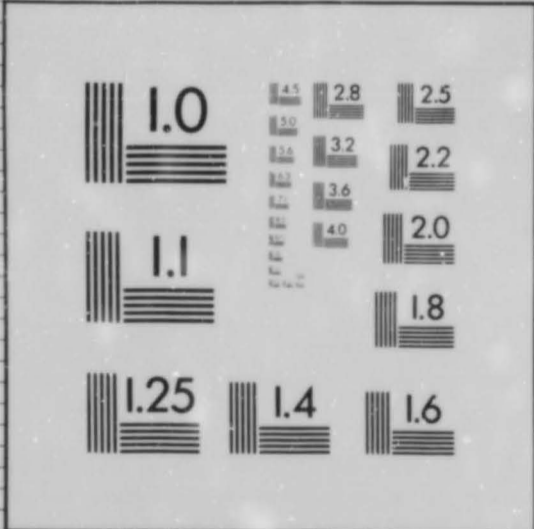
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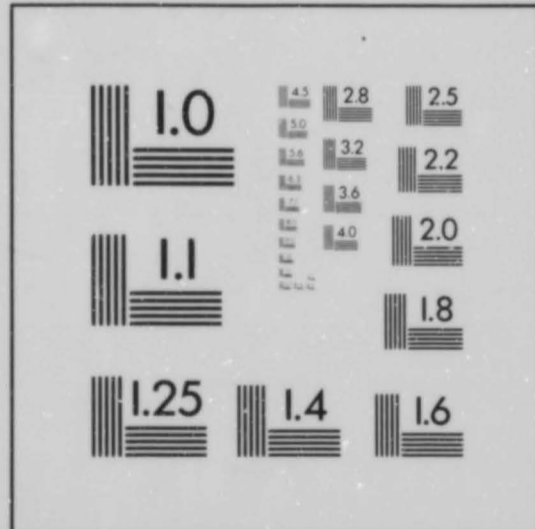


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**Excavations at Little
Oakley, Essex,
1951-78:
Roman Villa and
Saxon Settlement**

by P.M. Barford

with a report on his excavations by
M.J. Corbishley,

and contributions from
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Cover photo

R.H. Farrands on Site I with one of the oak handles (small find W1) in his hands.
Cover of *Archaeological Newsletter* VII(8) April 1962. Photographer: not known.

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LITTLE OAKLEY FARRANDS EXCAVATION

ARCHIVE 1 List of deposits on Site I

(Asterisk denotes a bag containing finds)

Context	Brief Description	Period	Trench No
1	Topsoil	7/8*	All trenches
2	Earth	4*	A
3	Rubble spread (= F11?)	4	A
4	Earth = 108	4	A
5	Rubble = 109	4	A
6	Earth and rubble (= 106)	4	A,C
7	Earth, pit fill (= F110)	4	A
8	Rubble foundation of Room 11	3*	A,C
9	Buried loam inside building	1**	All trenches
10	Pebble line	1	A
11	Rubble spread (= F64)	4	A,P
12	Robber trench	4*	A
13	Rubble base of Room 11	3	A,C
14	Robber trench upper fill	4	A
15	Robber trench	4*	A,F,W
16	Pebbly fill of scoop	2	B
17	Loam fill of scoop	2*	B
18	Fill of pit 5	4*	B
19	Earth and rubble fill of pit 5	4**	C,E
20	Earth and rubble fill of pit 5	4**	C,E
21	Mortar in loam fill of pit 5	4	C
22	Earth fill of pit 5	4	C
23	Rubble fill of pit	4*	C
24	Clay patch in trench side	4	C
25	Rubble with loam	4	E
26	Rubble septaria and tile, fill of pit 8	4	E
27	Rubble with less tile, fill of pit 8	4	E
28	Earth (= 27?)	4	E
29	Rubble and clay, fill of pit 8	4	E

30	As 20, with mortar fill of pit 8	4	E
31	Mortar, (base of pit 8?)	4	E
32	Robber trench fill	4	E
33	Mortar spreads and earth fill of pit 5	4	E
34	Mortary layer	2/3	EP
35	Sandy loam	2*	E,F,N
36	Clay patches	2	E
37	Clay patches	2	E
38	Clay mounded layer	2*	E
39	Clay layer (= 43)	2*	E
40	Clay mounded layer	2*	E,F
41	Green layer under 40 (= 42)	2	F
42	Green layer under 40 (= 41)	2*	F
43	Discoloured sand	(1)	F
44	Sandy earth	(1)	F
45	Charcoally loam, fill of slot	2	F
46	Black loam	2*	F
47	Sandy loam	(1)	F
48	Rubble layer (= 49)	(2-) 4	F
49	Rubble layer (denser than 48)	(2-) 4*	F,N
50	Grave fill	5*	F
51	Grave stoney fill	5	F
52	Fill under F49 (= 44)	(1)	F
53	Clay layer under 40	2	F
54	Robber trench	4	F
55	Robber trench	4	F
56	Charcoal layer	1-2	F
57	Rubble over F59 (= F49)	4*	F
58	Rubble spread	4-6	F
59	Depression	2*	F
60	Depression, red loam fill	2*	F
61	Fill of depression (G3)	2*	F
62	Black loam to NE of Area 5	2-4*	F
63	Robber trench	4*	G,H,O
64	Rubble spread (= F11)	4*	G

65	Wall	3	G
66	Room 11 upper fill	4	G
67	Room 11 mortar fill	4	G
68	Room 11 rubble fill	4	G
69	Fill of slot (D6)	4*	G
70	Fill of pipe D4	3	G.L
71	Fill of pit 3	1*	G
72	Pebble layer	(3?)	G
73	Buried soil	(1)**	All trenches
74	Upper fill box drain	3*	G
75	Fill of box drain	3*	G
76	Fill of drain trench	3*	G
77	Upper fill of ditch 1	1*	G.L
78	Lower fill of ditch 1	1*	G.L.P
79	Primary fill of ditch	1*	G.L.P
80	Upper fill of ditch 2	1*	H
81	Lower fill of ditch 2	1	H
82	Collapsed wall plaster	4	H
83	Charcoal fill of pit 2	1*	H
84	Fill of pit 2	1*	H
85	Soil layer (= F92 and F95)	(3?)*	G
86	Upper fill ditch 1 (= 77)	1*	G
87	Middle fill ditch 1 (= 78)	1*	G
88	Lower fill ditch 1 (= 79)	1*	G
89	Ditch 1	3*	G
90	Pipe trench upper fill	3-4*	L
91	Fill of D5 (= 93)	2-3*	L
92	Shelly loam (= F85)	(3?)*	L,P
93	Fill of D5 (= F91)	2	L
94	Depression, oystershells	2-4	L
95	Shell layer over ditch (= 92)	(3?)	L
96	Fill of pit 1	2	L
97	Clay layer, pit 1	2	L
98	Sand layer, pit 1	2	L
99	Ephemeral groove	5-7	L

100	Deposit in SE corner of Trench L	(1-3?)	L
101	Posthole?	1-4	P
102	Footings of wall	3	P
103	Fill of pit 7	4	P
104	Fill of Room 11	4	P
105	Fill of Room 11	4	P
106	Fill of Room 11	4	AP
107	Fill of Room 11	4	AP
108	Fill of Room 11	4	AP
109	Fill of pit 7	4	AP
110	Fill of pit 7 (= F7)	4	AP
111	Rubble layer	4	V
112	Dark loam, fill of pit 6	4	Q
113	Dark loam and mortar (pit 6)	4	Q
114	Sand layer (= F9?)	1	W
115	Slot D7	2*	W
116	Rubble spread	4	W
117	Pebble fill of depression	1-4*	N
118	Depression, sand fill	1-4	N
119	Depression, green fill	1-4	N
120	Depression, green fill	1-4	N
121	Depression, green fill	1-4	N
122	Posthole	1-4	N
123	Rubble	4	J
124	Gully under wall 5	2	P
125	Mortar layer	2-4	EP
126	Mortar in Robber trench (= F54)	4	F
127	Mortar floor of Room 11	3	P
128	Rubble spread 1963 trench	4?	X
129	Subsoil	-	X
130	Brick rubble	6-8	F

ARCHIVE 2: Site 1: List of deleted and amalgamated numbers

As the processing of the records of Farrands' Site 1 progressed, a number of context numbers were amalgamated. These are listed below to save lengthy reference to the text and to allow cross reference between the archival material and the published report.

Robber Trenches (F12, F14 and F15, F32, F54, F55, F63 and F126, mortar in base of F54).

Amalgamated Contexts: Underlined features are those mentioned in the published text.

2 = 103	Period 4
3 = 104 =(11)	Period 4
4 = 108	Period 4
5 = 109	Period 4
6 = 106	Period 4
28 = 27	Period 4
39 = 43	Period 2
42 = 41	Period 2
46 = 45	Period 2
47 = 44	Period 1
48 = 49	Period 4
52 = 44	Period 4
57 = 49	Period 4
66	Period 4 fill of Room 11
67	Period 4 fill of Room 11
68	Period 4 fill of Room 11
64 = 11	Period 4
86	Ditch 1 upper fill
87	Ditch 1 fill
88	Ditch 1 lower fill
89	Ditch 1 cut
92 = 85	Period (3?)
93 = 91	Period 2
95 = 85	Period (3)

ARCHIVE 3: Concordance of Farrands' Bag Nos with layer numbers on Site 1

Only layers with finds definitely assignable are listed here.

Layer		
1	Bag	227, 239, 283
2	Bag	290
8		204?
9		201, 202, 205, 301, 304
12		203
15		217-8, 312
17		206
18		207
19 and 20		208, 235-8, 275, 299 (208 = 20 only)
23		209
35		219, 220, 233, 305
38		234
39		225
40		224, 230, 231
42		225
46		228
49		302
50		232
57		229
59		221
60		223
61		222
62		226
63		241
64		246
69		244
71		267
73		246, 255, 270-274, 284
74		250
75		251, 254
76		243, 252, 253
77		258, 262, (266?), 268, 294
78	Bag	279, 291, 293
79		263, 264, 281

80	276, 292, 295, 299
83	268
84	269
85	245, 247-9, 296
86	259
87	260
88	261
89	277
90	280
91	282
92	285
115	307, 309, 311, 313
117	301

Villa Site, surface finds

Bag	101	General area
	102	General area
	103	Topsoil over Site III (Strachan field)
	104	Topsoil over and near Site II
	105	Allotments near Site I
	106	Adjacent to pond south of Site III (Strachan field)
	107	Strachan field to west of Site III
	108	Cullen field to east of villa site
	110	Found by Mrs. Smith while prefabs being built
	112	"Topsoil abreast ditch crossing south of villa in Strachan's field" (= Site III?)

ARCHIVE 4: Concordance of Farrands' Site II Trench K

(Nos K1 - K6 occur on trench D)

Farrands layer and Feature Number		PMB Context Number
1.	Topsoil	(K1)*
2.	Sandy earth overlying rubble	(K7)*
3.	Sandy earth overlying rubble	(K7)*
4.	Rubble layer	(K8)*
5.	Pebbly clayey earth under rubble	(K15?)*
6.	Dark sandy silt	(K24)*
6A.	Dark sandy silt	(K24)*
PH1	-	(K9)*
PH2	Dirty sandy earth	(K10)*
PH3	Dirty sandy earth	(K11)*
PH4	-	(K12)*
PH5	Sandy earth	(K21)*
PH6	-	(K13)
PH7	-	(K14)
PH8	-	(K23)
PH9	Dirty sandy earth	(K20)*
PH10	Sandy earth and rubble	(K22)*
-	Ditch	(K16)
-	Gully	(K17)
-	Gully	(K18)
-	posthole	(K19)

Concordance of Farrands' Finds Bag Nos Site II, Jan to March 1958

	Trench No.	Layer Farrands	Layer PMB
901	1-3	(3)	K7
902	2	(2)	K7
903	2	(4)	K8
904	2	PH1	K9
905	1-2	(5)	K15
906	2	PH2	K10
907	2	PH3	K11
908	3	(3)	K7
909	3	(6)	K24
910	2	(4)	K8
911	2	PH5	K21
912	2	(5)	K15
913	1	(6A)	K24
914	1	PH10	K22
915	1	(5)	K15
916	3	(3)	K7
917	3	(4)	K8
918	3	(5)	K15
919	4	(3)	K7
920	4	(4)	K8
921	5	(5)	K15
922	-	(3)	K7
923	Surface	(1)	K1
924	1-3	(4)	K8
925	1	PH9	K20

ARCHIVE 5: Concordance of Farrands' Site III

PMB Layer Numbers		Site III Phase	Site Period
P1	Ploughsoil	Modern	4/6
P2	Saxon dark loam	J	5
P3	Upper rubble spread	H	4/5
P4	Sandy loam	H	"
P5	Sandy loam	H	"
P6	Sandy loam	H	"
P7	Rubble spread	F(i)	3/4
P8	Layer A, B, C, composition unknown	E	3(i)
P9	Crag? (overlies Ditch 3)	D	"
P10	" (overlies Ditch 3)	D	"
P11	" (overlies Ditch 3)	D	"
P12	" (overlies Ditch 3)	D	"
P13	" (overlies Ditch 3)	D	"
P14	Clayey loam	C	"
P15	(Red Crag?)	C	"
P16	Grey clay (Ditch 3 fill)	D	"
P17	Mortar spread? (Ditch 3 fill)	D	"
P18	Orange sand (Ditch 3 fill)	D	"
P19	Black mud (Ditch 3 fill)	D	"
P20	Grey clay (Ditch 3 fill)	D	"
P21	Black clayey mud	C	"
P22	" " "	C	"
P23	Black shelly mud	B	2
P24	Waterlogged grey clay	A	"
P25	Shelly fill	A	"
P26	Shelly with rubble (Fill of Feature 4)	F	3/4
P27	" " " (" " ")	F	"
P28	" " "	F	"
P29	Shelly fill (fill of Feature 4)	F	"
P30	Dark shelly fill (" " ")	F	"

P31	Rubbly fill (Fill of Feature 5)	G	4/5
P32-6	Fills of Pit 6 described in text	H	"
P37	oven (feature 7) described in text	J	5
P38	Feature 8; pipe-trench in trench IIID	(F?)	
P39	Feature 9; pit in C3 sondage	(D?)	
P40	Feature 10; pit in trench III D	(H-J?)	

Most layers produced finds.

Concordance of Farrands' Finds Bag Nos Site III, Nov. 1958

1601	Square B2: "layer 5" (= P2) above rubble
1602	Square B2: "layer 6" (= P3) rubble
1603	Square B2: "layer 7" (= P4?) below rubble
1604	Square C2: "layer 8" (= P4-6) "below rubble and above septaria"
1605	Square C2: "unstratified top rubble thin sprad" (= P3)

These were the only bags numbered on Site III, which made processing difficult, it will also be noted that Farrands notice and collected finds from more layers than were actually recorded.

ARCHIVE 6: Concordance of Farrands' Finds Bag Nos Site IV 1952 to 1954 investigations of Ditch 1

Bag No.	Farrands layer No	
1151	1	Topsoil
1152	2	Earthy silt
1153	2	East end of trenches (junction with ditch 3, see below)
1154	2	A Earthy silt and charcoal
1155	3	Loam with profuse oystershell
1156	4	Shelly fill
1157	5(7F)	Shelly fill
1158	6	Primary shell silt eastern end
1159	6	Shell silt
1160	3	Two samples pinkish clay from oven
1161	3(8)	
1162	3F	Charcoal layer
1163	3(9)	
1164	3A(9aa)	Loam
1165	3B(9ab)	Loam and fired clay
1166	3C(9ac)	Loam
1167	3D(9ad)	Grey loam
1168	3B(9ab)	Fired clay
1169	3E(9b)	Loam
1170	3G	Thick oyster layer
1171	3H	Whelk and mussel shells
1172	3F & H	
1173	5	Shelly fill, western end trenches 8-11
1174	4	Shelly fill, trenches 10-11
1175	4A	Shelly fill, trenches 36-8
1176	4B	Shelly fill, trenches 36-7

Bags 1177-81 (1952-4) these are numbered 'ditch 2' and 'ditch 3'

Bag 1153 is numbered "at junction ditch 2" but ditch 2 does not join ditch 1 and is presumably an error for 'ditch 2' (amended in text to ditch 3).

- 1177 Layer 2 "ditch 2" (i.e. ditch 3)
- 1178 Layer 3 "ditch 2" (i.e. ditch 3)
- 1179 Layer 4 "ditch 2" (i.e. ditch 3)
- 1180 Layer 5 "ditch 2" (i.e. ditch 3)

1181 Layer 2 "ditch 3" (i.e. ditch 2)

It is probable that in 1954 ditch 2 was called 'ditch 3' and vice versa, since the real ditch 2 is unlikely to have had five layers of fill, but ditch 3 could

Investigations of Site IV ditches 1 and 2 in 1956-7 (all layers are ditch 1, unless otherwise specified)

Trench 1 (Sept. 1956)

- Bag 1201 Layer 1 loose earth and oyster top fill (Lava quern, T.S. cup)
- 1202 Layer 2 sandy shell, bottom of ditch (EIA pot)
- 1245 All layers
- 1251 Layer 4 earthy silt in pit, east end of section.
- 1267 All layers

Trench 3 (Oct. 1956-Jan. 1957)

- Bag 1205 Ditch upper fill, loose earth and oyster. Layer 1
- 1208 Ditch lower fill below oysters. Layer 3
- 1226 All layers
- 1270 All layers

East of extension trench 3

- 1218 Topsoil
- 1219 Shallow oyster layer. Layer 2
- 1220 Loose earth. Layer 3
- 1221 Shelly clay loam. Layer 4
- 1222 Ditch 2 earth fill. Layer 6

West extension trench 3

- 1235 Loose earth (layer 1)

Ditch between trenches 1 and 3 (Jan. 1957)

- 1232 Below oyster (layer 3)

- 1233 Topsoil
- 1234 Sandy shelly fill (layer 4)

Trench 4 (Nov. 1956)

- Bag 1227 Topsoil
- 1228 Black loam fill (layer 2)
- 1229 Shelly fill (layer 3)
- 1230 Grey charcoally loam and bones (layer 4)
- 1231 Layer below 'occupation layer' (layer 5)
- 1264 Lowest 'occupation layer' (layer 6)

Trench 5 (Jan. 1957)

- Bag 1236 (Layer 3)
- 1238 "Iron Age ditch" (= ditch 2? PMB)
- 1247 Loose loam, upper fill (layer 2)
- 1252 Topsoil
- 1254 Shelly silt (layer 3)

Trench 6 (Jan. 1957)

- Bag 1260 Dirty clayey filling (layer 1A)
- 1261 Layer 1B (bottom of layer 1A)
- 1262 Between clay and charcoal layers (layer 4)
- 1263 Shelly silt under charcoal (layer 5)
- 1268 All layers down to clay layer

Trench 7 (Feb. 1957)

- Bag 1239 Shelly layer
- 1244 Earthy silt in gully N. side of ditch 1 (layer 2A)
- 1246 Shelly silt under 2A (layer 3)
- 1266 "Side ditch earthy filling"
- 1269 "Shelly layer over ox bones"

Trench 9 (Feb. 1957)

- Bag 1248 Earthy silt in "Iron Age gully" (= ditch 2?) (layer 2)

Trench 10 (Feb. 1957)

- Bag 1249 Upper fill of ditch (layer 2)
- 1250 Topsoil

Trench 11 (March 1957) (Ditch 4)

Bag 1257 West ditch; lower fill, sandy silt (layer 3)
1258 West ditch; sandy earth and ironstone (layer 2)
1259 West ditch; upper part of 1258 (layer 2)
1287 West ditch; bone refuse
1288 West ditch; "occupation" (layer 2)
1289 West ditch; " (layer 2)
1290 West ditch; (as above) (layers 2 and 3)
1291 West ditch; grey sandy "occupation" layer (layer 4)
1292 West ditch; lower fill shelly (layer 5)

September 1970: Chase Lane School excavation

Bag 3033 Ditch 1 fill (+ ditch 2)

Trench 2 (Sept. 1956-April 1957; Pits 1 and 2) Square C2

1203 Topsoil
1204 Layer 2 (pit 2)
1206 Layer 3 (pit 2)
1207 Iron Age pit fill adjacent to pit 1
1223 Layer 4 (pit 2) (PMB layer 4)
1225 All layers (of pits 1 and 2 upper fill)
1240 Layer 6 (pit 2) (PMB layer 6)
1241 Layer 7 (pit 2) (PMB layer 7)
1242 Ditch 11 above Iron Age pit adjacent to pit 1
1243 Layer 8 (pit 1) (PMB layer 10)
1253 Layer 5A (pit 2) (PMB layer 3)
1255 Layer 5B (pit 1) (PMB layer 9)
1256 Layer 5C (pit 2) (PMB layer 5)
1265 Layer 9 (pit 1) (PMB layer 12)
1271 Ditch 1 on north side of pit
1272 Hearth on south of pit below ploughsoil

Square C3

1224 Layer 2 (PMB layer 2)

Trench 2

Square D2

1209 Topsoil

- 1210 Pit 1, layer 2 (i.e. PMB layer 9)
- 1211 Pit 1, layer 3 (i.e. PMB layer 11)
- 1212 Pit 1, layer 4 (i.e. PMB layer 12)
- 1213 Pit 1, layer 5 (i.e. PMB layer 13-15)
- 1214 Pit 1, layer 6 (i.e. PMB layer 20)
- 1215 Pit 1, layer 7 (i.e. PMB layer 22)
- 1216 Pit 1, layer 8 (i.e. PMB layer 23)
- 1217 Pit 1, layer 9 (i.e. PMB layer 24)

Pits 1 and 2 Site IV

Concordance of finds Bag numbers with PMB layer numbers

- 1
- 2 Bag 1204, 1224
- 3 Bag 1206, 1253
- 4 Bag 1223
- 5 -
- 6 Bag 1240
- 7 Bag 1241
- 8 -
- 9 Bag 1210, 1255
- 10 Bag 1243
- 11 Bag 1211
- 12 Bag 1265
- 13-15 Bag 1213
- 16 -
- 17 -
- 18 -
- 19 -
- 20 Bag 1214
- 21 -
- 22 Bag 1215
- 23 Bag 1216
- 24 Bag 1217

Trench 13 (April-June 1957) (Pit 3)

- 1273 Farrands Layer 1 (topsoil)
- 1274 Farrands Layer 2
- 1275 Farrands Layer 3
- 1276 Farrands Layer 4

- 1277 Farrands Layer 6
- 1278 Farrands Layer 5
- 1279 Farrands Layer 7
- 1280 Farrands Layer 11
- 1281 Farrands Layer 9 and 10
- 1282 Farrands Layer 8
- 1283 Farrands Layer 13
- 1284 Farrands Layer 14
- 1285 Farrands Layer 15
- 1286 Farrands Layer 16

See text for descriptions of finds

Site IV Pit 3

Concordance of Finds Bag Nos. with PMB layer numbers

- 1 Bag 1273
- 2 Bag 1274
- 3 Bag 1275
- 4 Bag 1276
- 5 Bag 1278
- 6 Bag 1277
- 7 Bag 1279
- 8 Bag 1282
- 9 and 10 Bag 1281
- 11 Bag 1280
- 12 No finds
- 13 Bag 1283
- 14 Bag 1284
- 15 Bag 1285
- 16 Bag 1286
- 17 No finds
- 18 No finds

Investigations in 1972-3 of Trench 18

- Bag 3001 Layer 2
- 3002 Below layer 2
- 3003 Below layer 2
- 3004 Possible gully in extreme south corner
- 3005 Charcoal layer

- 3006 Upper fill of pit 4
- 3007 Upper fill of pit 4
- 3008 Between ash and charcoal layer
- 3009 Ash layer
- 3013 Ash layer at bottom in white clay
- 3014 Earthy silt under clay
- 3016 Sandy earth
- 3018 Shelly silt in ditch 1
- 3019 Shelly silt in ditch 1
- 3020 Earthy silt over side of westerly ditch
- 3021 Shelly silt over side of westerly ditch
- 3022 Primary silt
- 3023 Earthy silt over ditch 1 in SE of trench 18
- 3024 Earthy silt between clay layer above, and shelly silt below, over ditch 2
- 3025 Primary silt ditch 2
- 3026 Under shelly clay layer and above primary fill ditch 2
- 3027 Earthy silt upper fill of ditch 1
- 3999 Selected medieval sherds from pit 4

Trench 18 Area II (Jan. 1973)

- 3010 Top fill of ditch
- 3011 Earthy silt in gully at east end
- 3012 Earthy silt west end
- 3015 White clay
- 3017 Top of ditch on north side of Trench 18

Trench 19 (December 1973)

- 3031 Earthy silt in top of ditch (coin in topsoil, medieval?)
- 3032 Craggy silt

Details of Sections of Ditch 1 Site IV (Fig. 43)

1. 'Cross Section No. 2' Section III Nov. 1956
2. Cross section No. 2 Section I east end Feb. 1957
3. East Section of trench 15 drawn from photo
4. Section 9 Trench ?
5. Section 8 Trench 9 or 11, west face
6. Section 4 Trench 8, west face
7. Section 3 Trench 8, east face
8. Section 2 Trench 4, west face

9. Section 1 Trench 4, east face
10. Section 5 Trench 33, west face
11. Section 6 Trench 37, west face
12. Section 7 north trench, north face

Layers described in text.

Appendix 1

Site I: Farrands' original section drawings

These sections are the tracings of Farrands' original field drawings prepared in 1975 by Christine Couchman of Essex County Council Planning Department, Archaeology Section. These have been altered interpretatively in the paper portion of this report, for consistency with the text. The original sections are presented here for accuracy, and verity, (see p. 10).

812

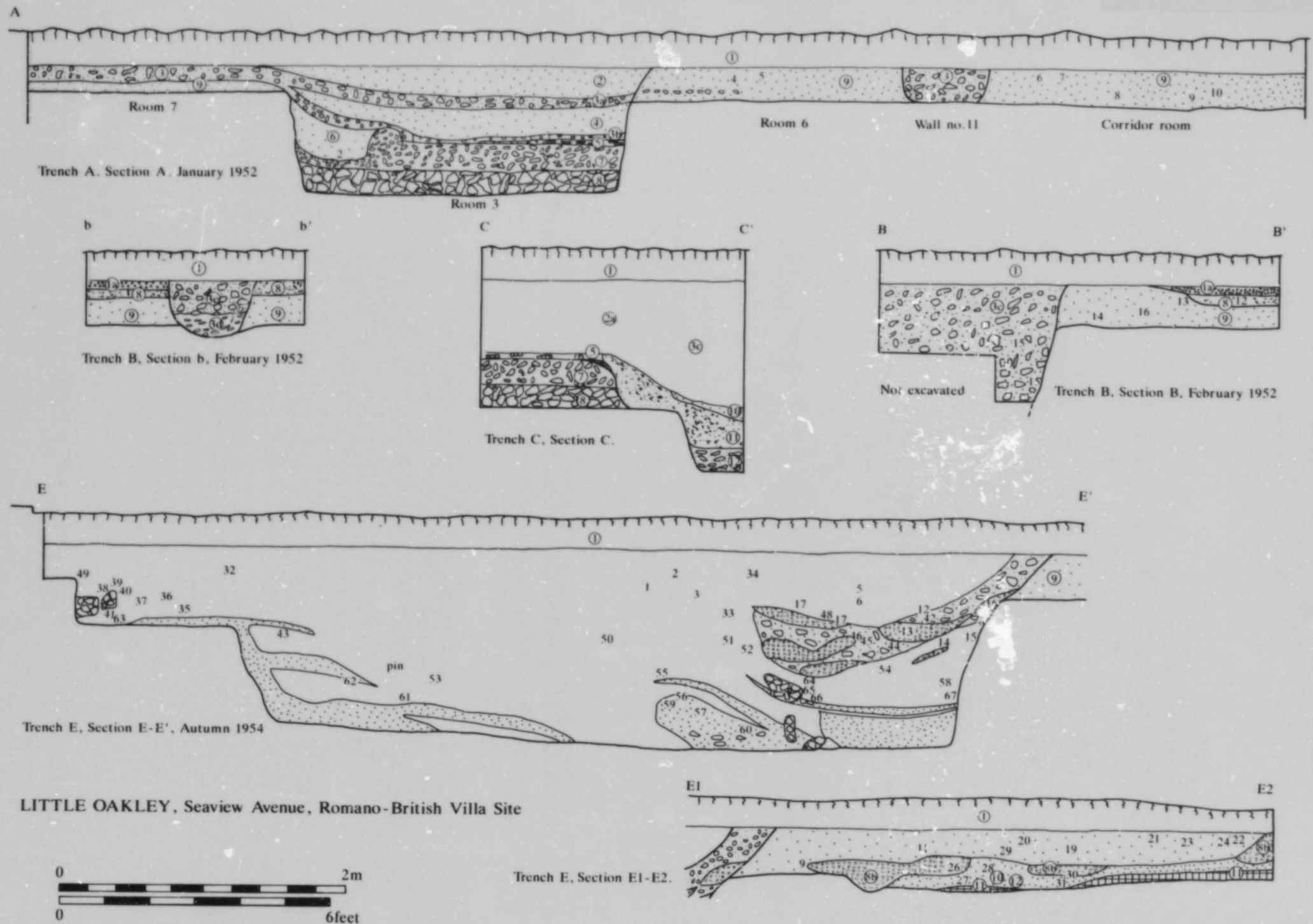


Figure 124 Farrands' original section drawings, Site I

APPENDIX 2

The evidence for the period 4 Rubble Spreads on Site I

In this report as has been noted previously, in-depth discussion of particular stratigraphic problems has been reserved for the microfiche appendices. One of the most problematic of the attempted interpretation of Farrands' notes is the nature of the upper layers of Site I, particularly the Phase 4(iii) rubble spreads. In the text these have been referred to and interpreted as building rafts (like those from Wroxeter). There are no such problems about the rubble spreads on the other sites, but the Site I layers require further discussion to set the record straight.

Farrands quite clearly expected to find a layer of "destruction rubble" overlying the villa remains, and when he found rubbly layers beneath the topsoil he seems to have found nothing remarkable in this. Sometimes he recorded them in the notes, sometimes they get only a passing mention. Rarely are these layers recorded in any detail. Adding to the difficulties, it seems that Farrands at times used the term 'rubble' loosely and it is not entirely clear what constituted 'rubble' in his opinion.

It seems clear from the site records in diary form that there were rubble layers in some places (e.g. trench A section), but even where mentioned in the notes, the schematised sections do not always show these layers. Plate VII shows that Farrands (especially in the early seasons) sometimes cleaned down to these rubble layers and recorded them (but not by stone-by-stone plans as elsewhere on the site). In other cases he simply dug straight through them, leaving a curt note in the site records. These references are sometimes muddled with other data and it was difficult to disentangle some of this.

When the writer began processing the Little Oakley records the rubble spreads were among the first features identified, and played their part in determining the site sequence (especially period 4). The writer was not anticipating these features beforehand, but was eager to accept their existence and implications, (particularly with regard to the evidence from Wroxeter, where he was involved in the excavations from 1983). As mentioned above, the status and sequence of the phase 4ii and 4iv pits underwent some mutation during further processing. As noted in the main text the deposits in Room 4 (the 'Deep Room') were particularly badly recorded. This led to a reassessment of the rubble layer (F25) in the upper fill of pits 5 and 6. It also led to a reassessment of the evidence of the other rubble spreads and a serious reconsideration by the writer of their original extent and significance. The results of this (in the form of the writer's conclusions and interpretation) have been presented above in the main text of the published report. The writer still believes in the authenticity of the majority of the rubble spreads identified in the original interpretation, and also that the general plan (Fig. 20) represents (in generalised form) their extent, as observed by Farrands.

The main problem became apparent when the plan Fig. 20 was compared with one of the few well-prepared sections to be drawn (Fig. 22) and photographed (pl. X), which could be expected to show the rubble layer overlying the fill of pit 6. The point is that neither section drawing or photograph show such a rubble layer (in the first processing this was not apparent, because the pits 5 and 6 were originally believed to be phase 4iv). The photo shows a little rubble but not in a definite layer; the field notes only mentioned "rubble" in general terms (though on several occasions). As emphasised above there is no conclusive reason why one cannot accept the other rubble spreads on other parts of Site I (or indeed Sites II, III and A) so this single trench does not force us to abandon phase 4(iii). It does however lead us to consider again the value of Farrands' records in some aspects (it should be emphasised that in many other cases there are instances

where the photographs support the notes and/or section drawings in recording layers or features, including some not fully appreciated by Farrands at the time of excavation). One is more cautious where there is less corroborative evidence; where there is none as in this case it invites a reconsideration of the original interpretation.

There are three ways out of this dilemma.

- (1) to assume that Farrands' records are hopelessly unreliable.
- (2) to assume that the rubble layer did not exist in this area, and that the site notes were misinterpreted by the writer.
- (3) to assume that the rubble layer did exist, but for some reason does not occur in the section.

The writer does not believe that the first option is viable. It is clear that, used with caution, Farrands' notes can be made to yield important information, even if in some cases (such as this) the results have to be hedged-around with caution.

The second option is more plausible, and the removal of this rubble layer from the site sequence would be possible, if inconvenient (see below). This is one way to solve the dilemma.

The third option should not be dismissed. In the past the evidence of sections cut through deposits was paramount, and treated as incontrovertible. In recent years newer techniques of excavation have stressed the importance of what Martin Carver has termed 'trace archaeology' (exemplified especially well in the deposits excavated by Philip Barker at Wroxeter 1966-1985). This type of evidence can only be detected by coming down onto it in a larger area excavation. It is precisely this type of problem that we are considering here. The old approach would have taken the section at face-value (option 2), but a more modern attitude would regard the section as not an ideal method of recording used alone. Farrands was digging downwards and mentions finding 'rubble'. The fact that this layer does not appear in his section does not necessarily mean it did not exist. For example the layer may have been thin and discontinuous and the section line may have coincided with one of the discontinuities (especially bad luck if it was a linear feature such as the edge of a floor or beam-slot!).

The disagreement of the section and the situation apparently recorded in the field notes is disquieting. The evidence for F25 is tenuous, but this is not enough in the writer's opinion to disregard it totally.

A glance at the matrix may make it appear to the reader that this decision was influenced by the desire to keep F25 in order to keep the sequence between the phase 4(ii) pits 5 and 6, and the phase 4(iv) pit 8. However, if F25 as a rubble layer is removed from the sequence, it would still have to be replaced by an F25 'rubbly loam layer'. This layer does seem to overlay pits 5 and 6, and is cut by pit 8. Thus even if the existence of the rubble layer was disbelieved, the sequence as set out above would be unchanged. As noted above and in the main text, the sequence and nature of deposits in the 'Deep Room' area is unclear, and there still exist a few uncertainties, such as this one. It is possible that further excavation of the untouched block of stratigraphy both sides of trench E (which was only 4 feet (1.3 m) wide) may in future resolve some of these.

APPENDIX 3

The Painted Plaster: Microfiche catalogue

This material cannot be detailed fully in the paper publication, but this archive should give an idea of the full range of material present.

Three main fabric types were recognised

Fabric A: yellowish or white with copious small pieces of crag shell. This was by far the commonest fabric.

Fabric B: white with medium grained quartz sand

Fabric C: pink, contains fine crushed tile

Farrands Site

Little plaster is extant and much of it is unlabelled. Most of it was painted white or creamy white, some with grey-black or dark red stripes. All pieces had a thin skin of pure white plaster 1-2 mm thick. No definite ceiling plaster was recognised.

Catalogue

F76 Bag 252

'Collapsed wall plaster outside Robber Trench of wall 5 in upper fill of drain trench'
All fabric A, mostly white but some with thin red or ochre washes. Some deeper red or ochre (from panels?)

F103

'Room 3 ("plunge bath") black layer'

Three weathered fragments:

- (a) one dark red panel (fabric B)
- (b) one mottled dark and olive green on red panel (fabric B)
- (c) one red on cream shelly (fabric A)

F104

'Room 3 top rubble'

one fragment plain white (fabric A) with [horizontal?] groove 5 mm wide, 2 mm deep.

F82

Eight small fragments of thin white plaster, fabric A.

F18

Room 1 fill (Bag 207)

Eight small fragments of white and cream (fabric A)

- (a) three ochre with brown splashes from panel
- (b) one from panel of colour greenish/grey/cobalt blue
- (c) one white with pale green tint (wash?)
- (d) 1 x white with pale red tint (wash?)
- (e) 1 x red brown with pale green stripe (min. 13 mm, widening one end)
- (f) 1 x pale green stripe (18 mm) on dark background.

F 50 Fill, Bag 232

Six small weathered pieces (fabric A)

- (a) 1 x pale green panel with red mottles
- (b) 1 x white with pale red tint as above
- (c) 1 x dark green
- (d) 2 x dark red

F69 Robber Trench, Bag 244

- (a) 1 x dark olive green on white (fabric A)
- (b) 1 x fabric A, surface weathered
- (c) 1 x fabric uncertain, white surface with shallow wide striations

F20 Room 1 fill 3c, Bag 238

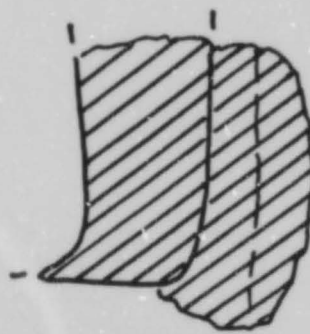
Eighteen small fragments of a variety of fabrics (fabrics A-C)

- (a) 2 x yellow ochre, one with red stripe on one side
- (b) 4 x dark red panel
- (c) 3 x dark and olive green mottled
- (d) 1 x dark green mottled
- (e) 1 x greyish blue grey
- (f) 4 x dark panels with upper strips (3.5 and 10 mm wide) purple-brown with light blue/grey and yellow ochre stripes
(one has purple brown stripe adjacent to greyish/ochre panel).

'Shelly fill' of Room 11

25 x fragments of wall plaster 20-30 mm thick, soft creamy-white fabric B. None have flat backs, some show stone impressions. One has the impression of the edge of a tile.

One has the impression of ? lead sheet ?lining of tank or bath" Flat surfaces with a 'step' - this could be the impression of a soldered butt-joint in a lead sheet. All except two are of the same type of material, greyish, rough surface painted grey, one has smudges of black. One fragment seems to be from the corner of a room (ceiling or plastered floor which has broken off at 'upturned edges').



One piece has grey surface as above, but is *opus signinum* over yellowish shelly mortar/plaster (fabric A). One piece (fabric A) yellow ochre panel adjacent to dark red stripe or panel.

F75

- (a) 6 x rough plain white (off-white fabric A)
- (b) 2 x polished dark red panels (fabric C)
- (c) 1 x abraded piece of fabric C

- (d) 2 x grey-blue frit (off-white fabric A)

F91 period 2 gully

Several pieces of plain white (white fabric A), rough flat surfaces.

F74

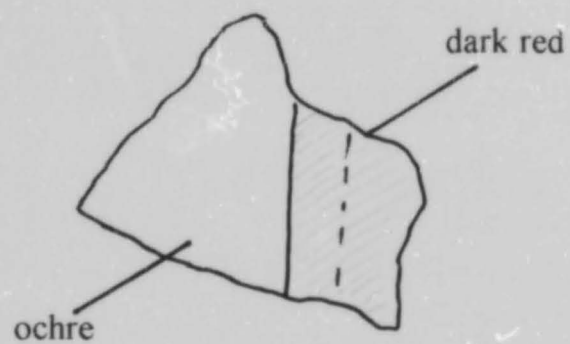
Drain fill (or F75-6)

- (a) Lots of coarse white painted plaster, a few with grey-blue (frit), off-white fabric A.
 (b) A few dark red panels on fabric C.

Site I F57 rubble layer

3 x pieces rough white shelly wall plaster. Part of half-round moulding, dark greenish wash.

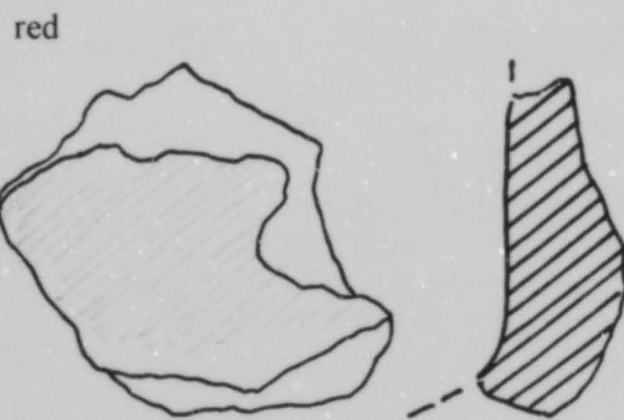
Miscellaneous fragments from Site I



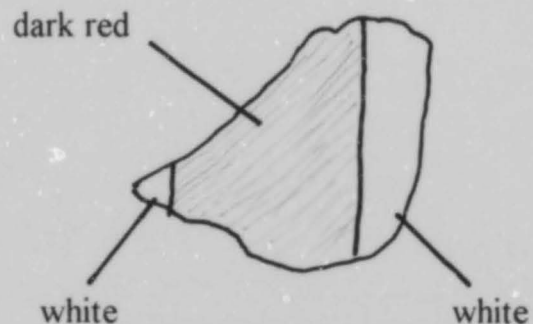
1) Unprovenanced, fabric B



2) Trench A, fabric A



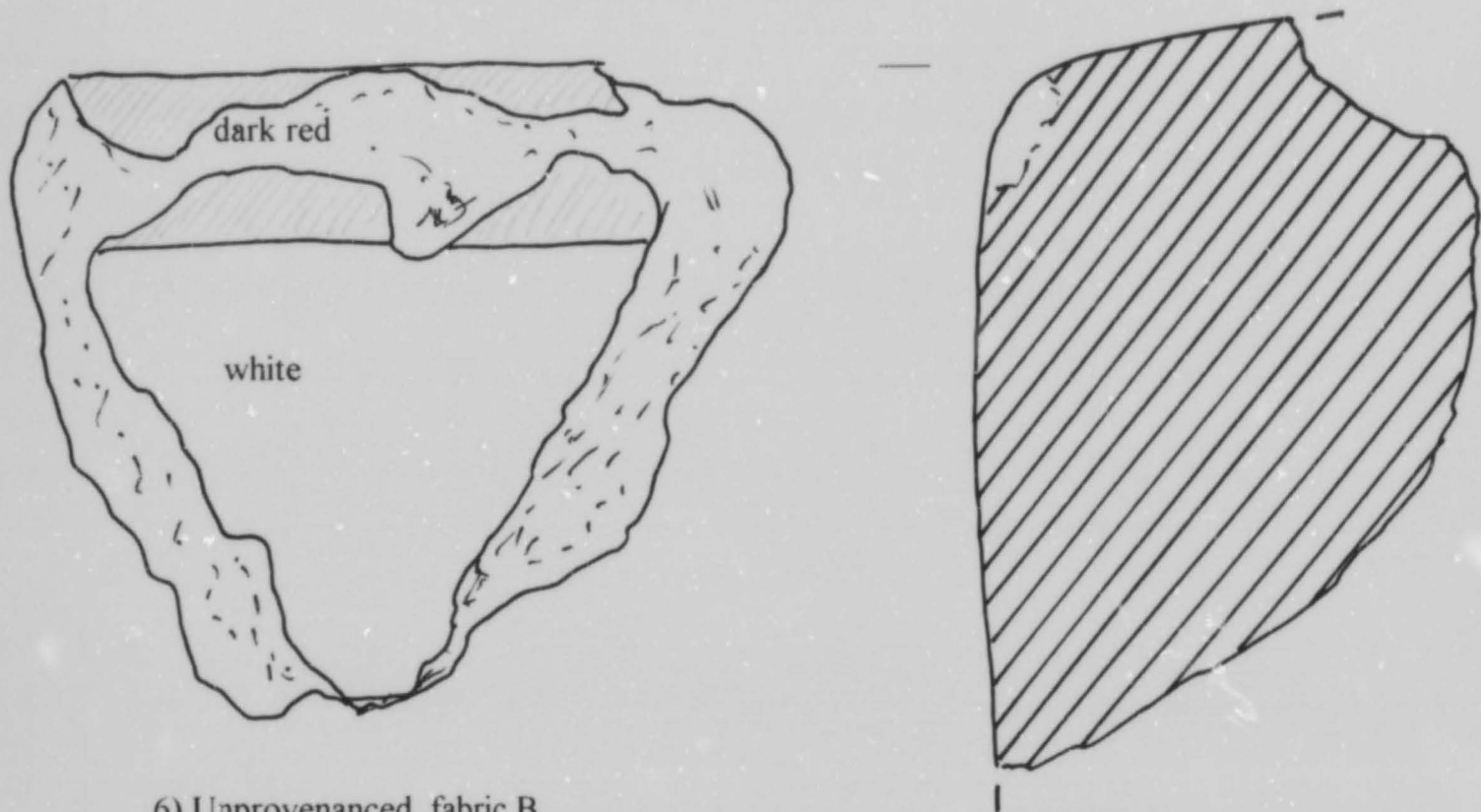
3) Trench A, fabric A



4) Unprovenanced, fabric A

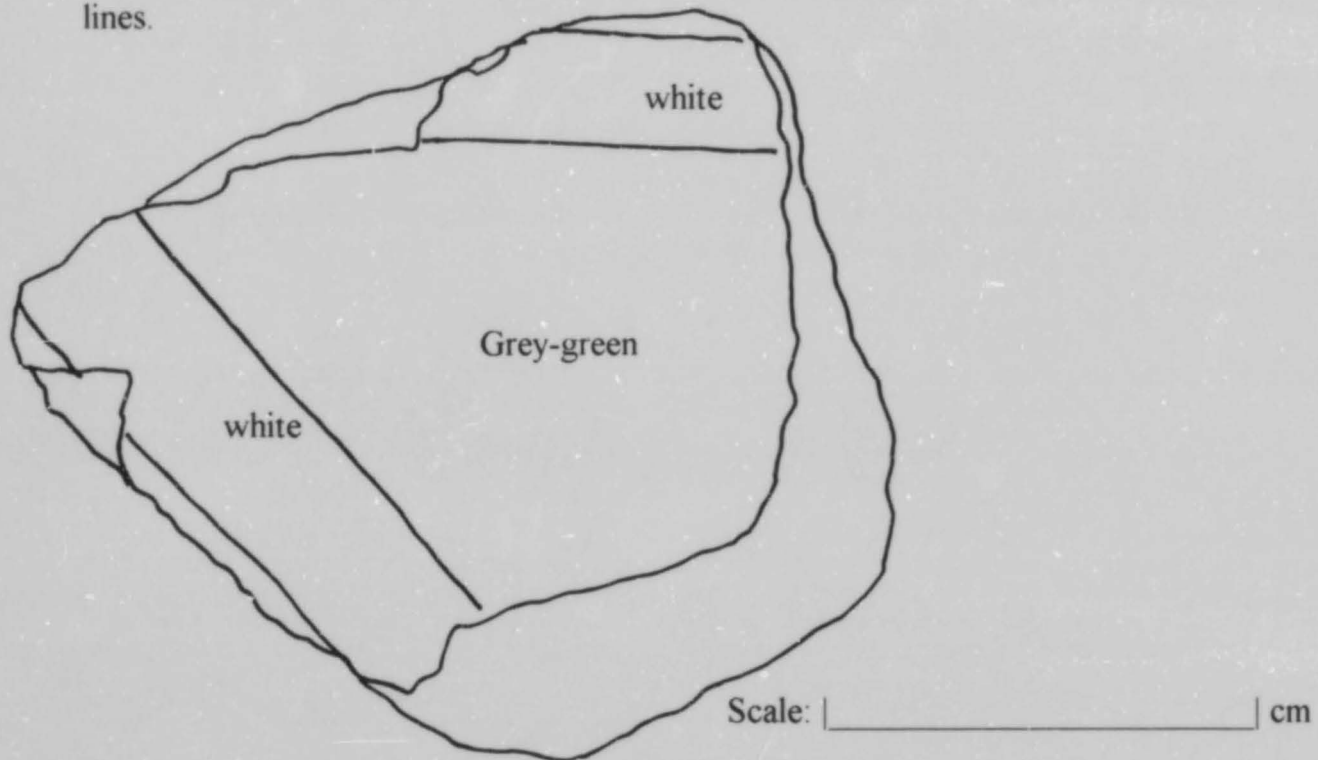
Scale: _____ cm

5) Trench A, small find 11, fabric B



6) Unprovenanced, fabric B

25-30mm thick with stone impressions on reverse. Grey-green panels with white lines.



SITE II

"29/8/59 clay on east side" top fill of phase C ditch.

18 x pale dark red brown fabric B, 13 x abraded white with dark red and grey splashes (very similar to the material in C23)

SITE III Lots of plaster in upper fill of Site III, some is plain white painted.

Corbishley sites

Various period 3(ii) and period 4 features on Site C produced painted plaster. In most cases they produced only a few pieces (contexts C27, C29, C31, C33, C34, C36 and C2) while some contexts, (notably pits C21, C22, C23 and c26) produced many kilograms of plaster, pits C21 and 22 producing by far the greater quantity. All of the material in these larger pits is different (even C22 and c23 produced dissimilar material).

The majority of the pieces were of shelly plaster of various colours and textures with a surprising subtlety of colours.

Pit C21-1

This feature contained a large quantity of material, most of it from grids 55G and 55Q with a smaller quantity from grid 55L. the material was generally similar from grid to grid (though grid Q contained more blue/grey and patterned pieces – possibly a different ‘wheelbarrow load’). All seemed to be plaster from walls.

55G

group (i) 104 plain white (+ a box-lid of scraps), some striated, but most fine white stark surface. Some slightly coloured pieces however suggest that some of this white may be faded pastel-coloured plaster (area covered by loose fragments 45 cm x 45 cm). This plaster has flat backs, is 15 mm thick with a very thin pure white plaster layer on the surface. Several shelly fabrics are represented. Some of this plaster was from over flue tiles, some perhaps applied to masonry (though the protuberances on the back of some pieces may be due to gaps between flue tiles, the pieces are too small to be certain). Some pieces were however quite large.

Group (ii) Coloured plaster all small abraded pieces.

- (a) at least one panel of greyish yellow ochre
- (b) edge of ochre panel with red stripe, wider than 10 mm
- (c) pink background with dark red splashes
- (d) dark red, possibly from a dark red panel
- (e) edge of ochre panel with red splashes, 10 mm wide red stripe, white panel
- (f) white with 10 mm black stripe.

55Q

group (i) 47 plain white, several fabrics as above (cover 30 x 30 cm area). One of the shelly fabrics is pale brown. One piece of white comes from the junction of a floor/ceiling etc or perhaps the corner of a room.

group (ii) coloured:

- (a) one panel at least, yellow ochre
- (c) pink panel or background
- (d) red panel
- (f) white with 3mm wide black stripe
- (g) pale ochre stripe
- (h) grey/green/blue panel on white, quite a lot of fragments

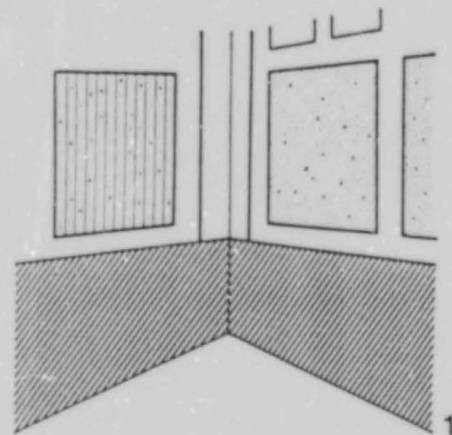
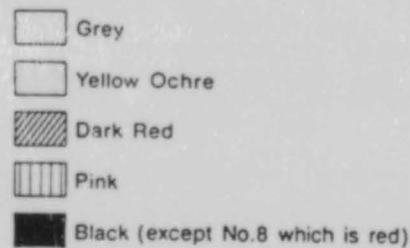
55L

group (i) 26 x small scraps of plain white cover an area of 10 x 10 cm

Group (ii) coloured plaster

- (c) pink panel
- (e) dark red stripe
- (k) pink panel with yellow ochre splashes

The plaster from Pit 21 apparently came from a room with white plaster which had panels of yellow ochre and pink splashed with dark red (in imitation of porphyry or marble) and pink splashed with yellow ochre. Other panels were dark red and dark grey-blue, though the former was most likely a dado. The yellow ochre panels were edged with broad red stripes, separating them from the white background on which were thin black and a few pale yellow ochre stripes. The form of the back of the plaster fragments showed that the plaster (Fabric A) had become detached from masonry walls, some from the face of flue tiles. Some white plaster had pastel shades of red or green, this could be faded or weathered plaster or it could be an intentional subtle effect.



(Fig. 87.1)

Pit C22

This feature produced two separate groups of painted plaster fragments. Those in the upper fills (C22-A, C22-B, C22-1) differed from those in the lower fills (C22-2). Within these levels, the various quadrants contained similar material.

Pit C22, upper fill

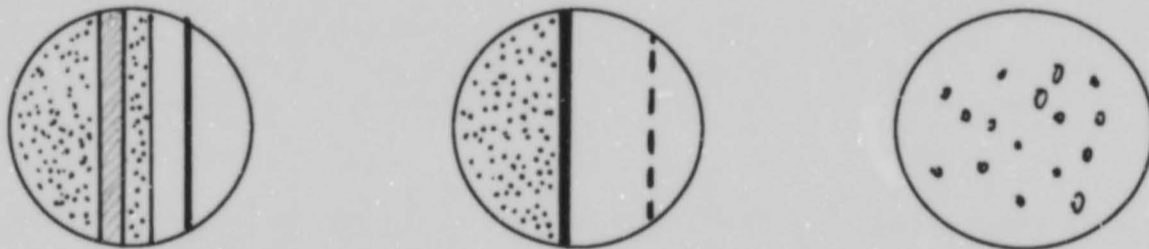
The upper fills contained a few pieces of plaster redeposited from the lower fill - but the lower fills do not contain material like that in the upper fill (a little of this redeposited material comes from fills C22-A and C22-B, the main group comes from fill C22-1). Some of the fragments from the upper fill were relatively large (Fig. 87.7 a-c). The plaster from the upper fill was fairly similar to that from pit C21, but was not a close match.

Group (i) plain white plaster, many fragments (covering an area 1 x 1 metre), some of it in quite large pieces with flat backs (25mm thick) with a 7mm surfacing coat. Some of them have curved lines on their exterior surface, probably not incised but perhaps weathered boundaries of different applications of plaster. The white plaster is soft, with a brownish hue and shelly, the surfaces are fairly fine.

Group (ii) painted plaster which falls into three main groups.

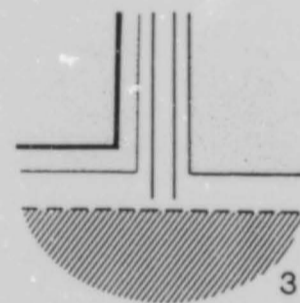
- (a) yellow ochre panel with broad dark red stripe near the edge and an adjacent thin black line
- (b) yellow ochre panel with thick black on the edge delimiting it from a white area. There may be a thin black line nearby.
- (c) white with splashes of black ochre and red.

(n.t.s.)

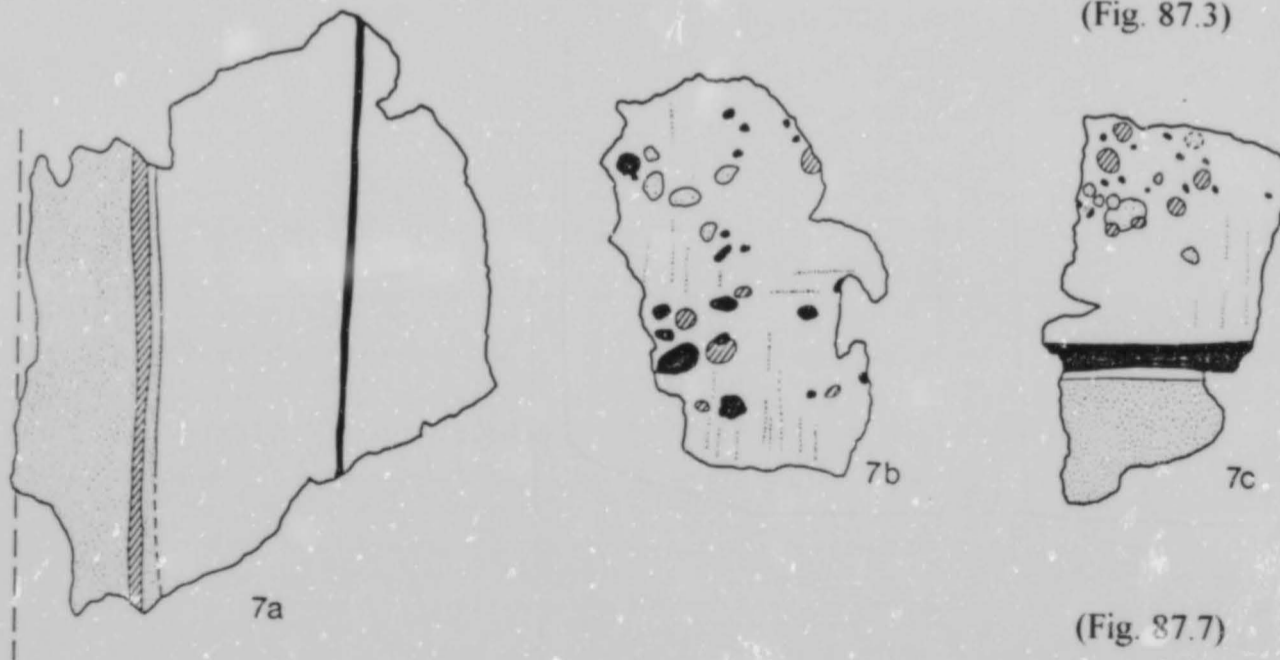


- (d) odd pieces of stripes of black and red ochre.
- (e) at least one panel of pale green, but not much survives – this may be derived from the lower fill.
- (f) pink panel, this may also derive from the lower fill assemblage.
- (g) quarter round moulding or window splay, painted dark red (Fig. 87.8).

This relatively large assemblage consisted of fragments in fabric A painted with panels of yellow ochre with red and yellow stripes at the edge, or with black stripes at the edge. The predominant colour represented was white, sometimes splashed with red, black, grey or yellow ochre (Fig 87.7 a-c). One of the fragments (Fig. 87.7a) comes from the corner of a room. This has a broad yellow ochre stripe picked out with narrow red and black stripes against the white.



(Fig. 87.3)



(Fig. 87.7)

Pit C22, lower fill

The lower fill of pit C22 contained predominantly white plaster of Fabric A.

Group (i) plain white plaster – some fine, some coarser. Brownish soft plaster (covering an area 70 x 70 cm), with flat backs, 15 mm thick, possibly from flue tiles. Some of the surfaces have curved 'incised' lines as above. Surfaces not perfectly flat. One piece has a small area of burnt daub on the back. One piece with white paint has an odd section.

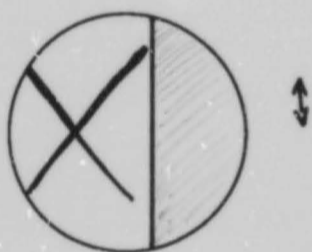
Group (ii) Painted plaster.

- (a) yellowish green stains on white plaster.
- (b) black stains on white plaster.
- (c) black lines on white.

This coloured material may be faded or have been applied as light smudges.

- (d) coarsely striated white with red stripes, transverse and diagonal to the striations (4 fragments), pale red wash strip 10 mm wide.
- (e) pale grey/pink red wash over similar plaster (19 frags), one has the edge of the panel (along striations) butting up against white, no stripe.

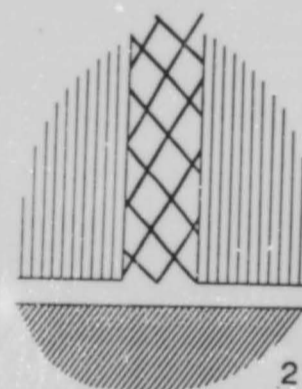
(d) and (e)



(f) and (g)



(n.t.s.)



- (f) dense dark red panel (21 frags).
- (g) edge of red panel abutting white, no stripe (7 frags)
- (h) malachite green panel (5 frags)
- (j) black stripe (?) one frag.

The decorative scheme is in some ways similar to that in C21, but the fabrics differ, the plaster from C21 is finer. The material was predominantly white, but with panels of pink wash and diagonal latticed red stripes. Again a dark red panel or dado abuts white plaster. A few pieces of malachite green may have been from this scheme. Some pieces of white had pastel shades of black, yellow and green. The back of this plaster was totally flat, which suggests that it had come from the application of plaster over a smooth surface, such as previously existing plaster or less likely daub.

Pit C23

This feature contained a moderate quantity of plaster from at least two decorative schemes. Most of this material was found in the lower fill of the pit.

Group (i), fabric A – shell-tempered white plaster in small pieces (covers area of 20 x 20 cm). Surface is fine.

- (a) mostly white painted.

- (b) pink wash (one panel only?).
- (c) dark red stripe (?)
- (d) black stripe, 12 mm wide.

Most of this material came from the lower fill of the pit

Group (ii), fabric C. One fragment, from upper fill, fine surface painted dark red.

Group (iii), fabric B – 81 fragments. Thick mortar layer with 10 mm thick finishing layer with very thin plaster coating. Flat back, seems to be from a daub wall. The mortar contains small (less than 10 mm) pebbles. This material comes both from the upper and lower fill.

From the upper fill (C23, C23-A, C23-B):

- (a) mostly white (25 x 25 cm area)
- (b) dark red panel (2 frags)
- (c) greyish (1 frag)
- (d) window splay or similar moulding painted red (C23-B)

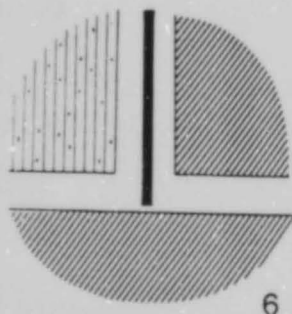


(d)

From the lower fill (C23-1, C23-2):

The lower fill contained material very similar to that in the upper fill.:

- (a) mostly white.
- (b) dark red panel.
- (c) dark red stripe.
- (e) part of a panel with pink wash with random dark red splashes (Fig. 87.9)



6



9

The first decorative scheme was on plaster of fabric A and was white with dark red panels and stripes. The second group (Fig. 87.6) was on plaster of fabric B and again was predominantly white with dark red panels and stripes. The assemblage also contained pieces of pink panels with dark red splashes (Fig. 87.9). This plaster had a flat back. A third scheme was represented by a single fragment of fabric C with a dark red painted surface.

Pit C26

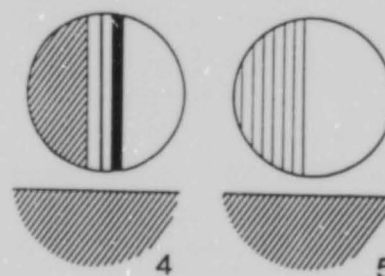
This feature produces a complex series of fragments of painted plaster, all of it from the upper fill. C26-1, nine fragments similar to that in the fill below (mostly of group iv with red and grey stripes), C26-2, lots of plaster, C26-3 and C26-4, no plaster at all. No ceiling plaster was recognised.

There were at least six individual groups recognisable in this material, some 45 white pieces could not be assigned a group, one has a red/ochre boundary – could be redeposited.

Group (vi), seven fragments of white sandy mortar with tile flecks. At least 75 mm thick but no back present. 15 mm thick finishing layer of yellowish sandy mortar, thin pure white plaster skim (this is not *Group iii*).

- (a) off-white heavily striated painted surface.
- (b) broad red stripe, 20 mm wide, runs parallel to the striations.
- (c) one fragment with thin grey stripe – possibly not *Group vi*.

The material from Pit C26 matched some loose fragments from the central block of Building 3, suggesting that the plaster in this pit came from this part of the villa building. The plaster represents two decorative schemes, one applied over the other. The first (Fig. 87.4) was a thick layer of shelly plaster applied over flue tiles. This had white painted surfaces with dark red panels and broad red and thin dark grey stripes. A splash of yellow ochre occurs on one piece. A similar decorative scheme was also applied to some fabric C pieces. Over the top of this first scheme was a second (Fig. 87.5) of fabric B plaster with off-white surfaces with pink panels and greyish-green stripes.



Several pieces of true *opus signinum* with painted surfaces were also present. Flue tile impressions were seen on the back of some of the painted plaster fragments; both wavy combed and diagonal-scored flue tiles were used in the same wall. The painted plaster evidences Roman 'jerry-building', since the variation in distance between the painted surface and tile impressions show that the later were not precisely-aligned and not lying flat on the wall.

Pit C27

This feature produced only a little plaster, all in fairly small pieces. The material was in a variety of fabrics which could not be matched with other groups.

13 x fine white (12 x 12 cm area), one with red stripe on white, of indeterminate width,

1 x black and another weathered.

3 x pink (two textures)

1 x grey green

All have flat backs. The material probably represents white and pink panels on the white with a decoration of red stripes. Three larger fragments of three different fabrics are pink painted *opus signinum*.

Pit C29

2 x white scraps (texturally similar to that in the lower fill of C 22).

C31 and C25

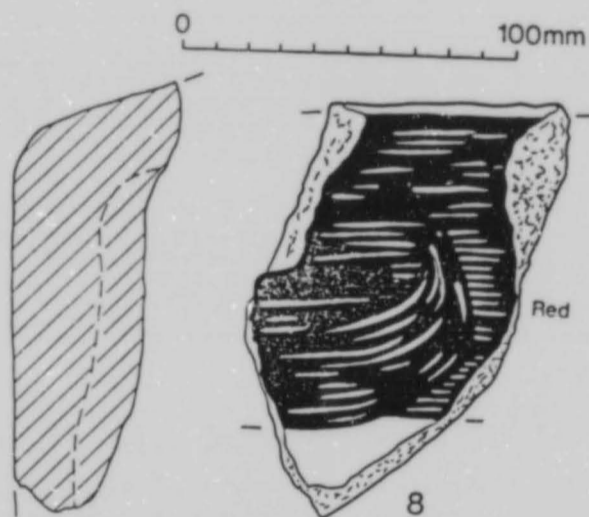
A small group of distinctive plaster

Group (i), fabric A. Four massive chunks of shelly mortar with a 15 mm thick layer of shelly plaster. This has rough white painted surfaces, not overpainted. Two slabs (70 mm thick) have flue tile impressions on the back.

Group (ii), three fragments of opus signinum with red and pink mottled overpainting.

Also one largish piece with a curved edge with a broad dark red stripe adjacent to a white panel (Fig. 87.8). This may have been a window splay, possibly this was a horizontal element rather than a vertical edge.

None of this material has any impressions on the back (cf the material from the bath, feature 150, at Marshfield, Avon, Barford in Blockley 1985, 252-9).



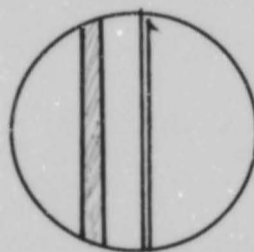
Group (iii), two large and three smaller fragments of shelly mortar rendering with good (wavy) combed and flat faced flue tile impressions (not set perfectly vertical and flat in the wall). 40 mm thick, surface fine and painted deep red.

Over this is a second coat, 9 mm thick of sandy mortar with a coarse white painted surface, a pink panel was also present (cf Group v).

Group (iv), fourteen shelly mortar fragments, 35-40 mm thick with impressions on the back of flue-tiles (both 'combed-wavy' and diagonal scored lattice). Surface finishing layer 10+ mm of shelly plaster, fine white surface.

(a) broad red stripe (< 40 mm wide) and thin grey stripe (2.5 to 4 cm wide) on white (25mm between the stripes). The direction of dribbles (on plaster below) show that the stripes were vertical.

(c) grey stripe only (7 frags)



(b) red stripe only (3 frags)

(d) yellow ochre splash (1 frag)

(e) one piece has Group 5 plaster on the surface.

One or two pieces have splashes in runs of liquid pure white plaster, possibly from the ceiling (?).

Group (v), fabric B, sandy, yellowish, coarse striated surface. Fourteen fragments (+ one on Group iv plaster, see above).

(a) off-white with pale greenish/grey stripes (10 mm wide). Direction uncertain, no other colours. Some traces of Group 4 design on back.

C33

A few small pieces, somewhat similar to that in C34 (but not as C26).

Robber Trench C34 (3B)

One large piece of plaster, white, wide red strip, one narrow black stripe. This is the same as the plaster in C26.

C36

1 x pink, virtually identical to some in Pit C26.

C2-2 (grid 54m)

1 x large piece of white multiplayer plaster as in the lower fill of pit C26, has three green stripes.

APPENDIX 4

Slag Archive

Iron 'smithing' slag came from a number of deposits:

Farrands Site I;

F3, F4 (13 frags), F8, F35, F49, Robber Trench fills, pipe trench, upper fill F20 (7 fragsm 120 g). Upper fill of Room 11 and F89 (six frags).

Site III;

upper phases, a little

Site IV:

top of ditch, trench 19

lower fill of ditch 1

Pit 2 (5 frags)

Pit 3

Corbishley -

topsoil (all sites) 1.3 kg

A5 and A16 (4 scraps)

A23 (12 fragments cf with pottery)

C27 (four frags)

A3 quite a lot (text)

C26 quite a lot (text)

A21 one fragment (text)

C15 a few bits

C21 a few bits

C33 a few bits

Note on Site I preponderance in rubble layers F3 = F11, F49 and RT fills and Room 11 fills F20 etc.

Fuel Ash Slag was found in a number of contexts sometimes with other types of metalworking debris.

Iron Rich fuel ash slag A3 a quantity (text), C32, C33, C36 and D14.

Green and vitreous (?non-ferrous) Site I F35, Site IV pit 1.

APPENDIX 5

Epilogue: Little Oakley and Archaeological Heritage Management

The history of the work at Little Oakley forms a microcosm of the history of the archaeology of Essex in the twentieth century. The site remained totally unknown until the accidental presence of an amateur archaeologist at a time when digging of a service trench in the early part of the century revealed archaeological remains. If it had not been for this accident, the Little Oakley villa would have probably never been discovered (how many other sites of this nature have thus escaped notice in similar circumstances?). Although the site was known, intense destruction in 1946-7 could not be countered (as on many sites) by the meagre resources available for rescue archaeology in this period. Again, this is probably typical of what was happening all over the region in the reconstruction after the War.

While part of the site had been seriously damaged by the bulldozing during prefab construction, there were still areas of the site which were relatively well-preserved. Plough damage to deposits such as the rubble spread on Site II had not been as severe as it may now be assumed to be after three decades of deep ploughing and part of the villa buildings survived under allotments, but were under threat from projected building. As in the case of many other sites, any further work in the 1950s was in the hands of a small group of amateurs which amassed important data, but apart from publishing a few general accounts, were unable to process and publish the results thoroughly. Dick Farrands' excavations were of a quality and nature typical of much of the work that was being done in the region in the 1950s and uncovered much useful information and material for study. The Farrands excavations showed the potential of the Little Oakley site (and that it had not been totally destroyed in 1946-7). This produced convincing arguments for the raising of funds in the 1970s for the formation of a dedicated local group -- fired by the RESCUE ethos -- and led by a teacher who planned and executed for a relatively small cost a successful campaign of rescue excavations on the part of the site threatened by redevelopment. The research design of these excavations was however limited by financial and logistic stringencies, but also by the non-availability of certain key information produced by the earlier amateur excavations (in particular concerning the precise site of Warren's observations).

The death of R.H. Farrands led to his considerable collection of finds from his many field activities being deposited together with the records in Colchester and Essex Museum where there were no museum resources to properly process them and even repack them. This is the typical fate of such collections of artefacts and archaeological data amassed by the amateur archaeologist who has been unable to organise the publication and deposition of such material in their lifetime (in other cases however the material is dispersed on the death of the excavator or collector). The 1980s were a period characterised in British archaeology by the 'backlog publications programme', and the present writer's work on the Farrands archive is a reflection of this, and it was possible to organise the financing of work on this material. The circumstances concerning Building 1 reported here illustrate quite clearly the significance of the availability of all previously collected data as a basis for formulation of future heritage management decisions. The unintentional non-investigation of this structure or sampling of areas potentially crossed by features to the north of Building 3 in the 1975-8 campaign are a clear example of this. The long period of gestation of this report is however symptomatic of the difficulties of conducting work of this type.

Little Oakley also reflects another trend, towards landscape archaeology. Farrands was already aware of the need to look beyond the bounds of the conventional idea of a 'site', and devoted considerable resources to an investigation of part of the villa's field system. In his later work he

would study the cropmarks of the area to put the excavated ditches into a wider context (including discovering cropmarks of undetected ditches immediately adjacent to those he had previously excavated). The team directed by Mike Corbishley began fieldwalking the wider area around the excavations. In the present report the writer has attempted a more holistic approach to the wider landscape around the site, attempting to use the scant evidence available to explore the economic basis of the villa estate and to model the layout of the estate itself. The latter has involved a study of the question of continuity in the landscape, a topic which has created growing interest in Essex archaeology since the 1970s. The site is widely-known locally (and also appears on the OS maps). During the 1975-8 excavations, the site was visited by many local inhabitants and attracted much media interest. Here archaeological research is involved in creating a 'sense of place' for local communities.

Investigations of the site also reflect the development of a few of the paradigms in the archaeology of the area. In the period between the two World Wars a primary subject of interest was a site-specific view of Roman Essex, aimed principally at placing dots on distribution maps and digging to recover site plans and artefacts. This was the aim of the beginning of the Farrands excavations. By the time these were drawing to a close, archaeological interest was aroused by questions of the transitions between Roman and Anglo-Saxons, and economic interpretations of Roman sites, subjects reflected in the research design of the 1975-8 excavations. This coincided with greater attention paid to the interpretation of stratigraphy (with the introduction of new excavation methods), and also to the artefact assemblages recovered by excavation (exemplified by the quantum leap in our methods of processing and understanding of Romano-British pottery of the region). The period is marked by an increased awareness of the amount of information that could be drawn from relatively non-descript artefactual material and an increase in size of small-find reports (and the materials discussed in them). It was also a period of interest in environmental evidence, and it is unfortunate that various circumstances have conspired to make this one of the least satisfactory aspects of the present report. The trend towards understanding the site in context of its landscape was also a feature of that same period and seems still to be a field of current interest.

Little Oakley is clearly a site of some importance for the understanding of several aspects of the archaeology of the region. Despite the several episodes of observation and investigation (Warren in 1939, Hull and Brinson in 1946-7, Farrands in 1951-1973 and Corbishley in 1975-8), it is clear there is still much to be learnt about the site. Although the site has been extensively damaged by previous activity, it seems that even in the centre of the modern housing-estate, destruction of the archaeological remains has not been total. While the foundations of the houses erected in the 1970s and trenches for their services have irrevocably destroyed the stratigraphy of the unexcavated areas, watching briefs of the work underway suggest the likelihood of some survival as islands of stratigraphy separated by extensive areas of destruction outside the areas sampled in the rescue excavations of 1975-8. There seems to have been little recent disturbance of gardens to the rear of the buildings and other open areas. Here we may expect survival of traces of other villa buildings and outbuildings, associated negative features (pits, ditches, drains etc), and perhaps other evidence. In other areas, parts of the site seem likely to be sealed under asphalt roads and concrete rafts and may be relatively intact, though their condition is difficult to predict.

Sites II, III, IV, V, and VI are under the plough, and it seems from the quantities of archaeological material annually brought to the surface that plough erosion is taking place. Beyond this are the fields which have not been sampled by excavation, but in which other archaeological material occurs on the surface, and also in some cases produce cropmarks. Around these are further areas the archaeological potential of which is unknown (either because they are

built-up, for example areas under the modern village, or produce no cropmarks or have simply not been examined yet). Among these are areas where investigation would clear up some of the problems raised here (such as the presence of a water-lead to the site, an access road from the north, or the history of particular elements of the 'relict landscape' etc.).

The piecemeal nature of the previous excavations of the site hinder the proper consideration of many of the questions raised in the previous chapters, and only a wider view of the site itself and especially the investigation of some of the areas between the previously excavated portions will enable some of the outstanding questions to be resolved. In order for the picture presented here to be verified and the interpretations tested, this will involve further investigation. At the moment there is no opportunity (or, one might argue, need) for these investigations to take place. A subject for concern however is the present and future progressive destruction of evidence in these areas, reducing the information which will be available to future investigators.

The concentrated modern settlement on the housing estate is inevitably an ever-present threat to those areas of intact stratigraphy remaining in the central zone of the site. There are no constraints on the modern council estate inhabitants preventing them from digging holes in their back gardens (for planting trees, putting up washing lines, burying deceased pets etc.). Renewal of services may run in existing trenches or may involve the digging of new ones. The resurfacing of access roads and parking areas may be preceded by bulldozing. Fig. 53 shows the relation of these areas to the previous excavations. The areas around the most easterly buildings of the estate are still largely unkempt open ground, at the time of writing mostly overgrown by brambles and long grass.

Ploughing is eroding what is left of the stratigraphy of Sites II-VI. The open areas are prone to looting by metal-detector users. Other activities are hindering our understanding of the wider landscape context of the excavated remains. Changes involved in the agricultural use of the zone around these areas may cause unrecorded alterations in the centuries-old pattern of land boundaries, removing nuances of their layout or composition which are important clues for an analysis of the history of their development. Unobserved development (such as the recent construction of new houses in the village, or the digging of cable trenches) may destroy archaeological evidence which would enable adding new information concerning the layout of the Roman estate and following the later history of development of the area. Even the determination of a lack of archaeological material at a certain point under certain conditions can be used to falsify hypotheses and would thus if observed be potentially informative.

This report raises several important questions, to what extent do we 'understand' the Little Oakley villa site? To what degree has the site been 'investigated'? Do we reach a stage when we stop investigating a potentially informative site and allow redevelopment to carry on unchecked? Or (given the relative scarcity of qualified workers which prevents us from realising the ideal of keeping a close watch on the environs of every known archaeological site in Essex), should the intellectual investment in certain sites at the exclusion of others be built-upon to increase our understanding of selected sites? If so, which sites would be the focus of such intensified activity, and - more importantly - who would pay for it?

It seems that - despite the recent destruction - Little Oakley still has potential for addressing a range of important archaeological issues. A case can be made for the further investigation of even the area already the subject of developer-funded rescue excavations (the modern housing estate) when the site once again comes up for redevelopment. These excavations - if they were to take place - would have to be on a much larger scale and will have to deal with more complex

problems than the 1975-8 campaign. It is hoped that the new developer can be convinced that a site can be excavated twice and to supply funding for this work.

In particular, however, an archaeological case can be made for the discontinuing of deep ploughing of some areas of the site (especially on the slope) to prevent further erosion.

The case for scheduling the Little Oakley site is clear. As always the problem of the boundaries of the area to be scheduled are difficult to define. The problem is compounded by the fact that the known villa building itself, the principle feature of interest (the 'monument') being either excavated or to some extent presumed partially destroyed by a 1970s housing estate. It would be difficult to define the edge of the zone which should be protected in the fields to the south east of the site (i.e., Sites II-VI) on the basis of the fragmentary evidence from the earlier excavations. This is a familiar problem in the case of other 'flat' archaeological sites. Whatever zone is selected to be scheduled, there will always exist a peripheral area which is not devoid of archaeological interest, and in an ideal world would be the subject of planning controls and constant and informed archaeological investigation. Unfortunately at present there are no organisational possibilities of establishing constant archaeological observation of this area, and much potential information will undoubtedly be lost.