EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Heybridge, a Late Iron Age and Roman settlement: excavations at Elms Farm 1993–5

Volume 1

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Cover illustration:
Digital reconstruction of Elms Farm in the early Roman period, by Roger Massey-Ryan

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Acknowledgements

Summary

The Late Iron Age, Roman and early Saxon settlement at Elms Farm, Heybridge, Essex was excavated in the mid-1990s. This monograph (Volume 1) presents the synthetic discussion chapters regarding the site. Volume 2, which comprises the stratigraphic descriptions, finds and environmental reports, is published in parallel as a digital monograph in *Internet Archaeology* (http://intarch.ac.uk/, doi:10.11141/ia.40.1), where it can be accessed free of charge. The Elms Farm site was excavated in advance of the construction of a large housing estate by Bovis Homes Ltd.

The total development area comprised *c.* 29 hectares, of which some 18ha were subject to varying degrees of investigation by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU). The large-scale of the excavations, is matched by the substantial and important artefact assemblage recovered, which included 6.4 tonnes of Late Iron Age and Roman pottery, 2,910 Roman coins and over 9000 animal bones. Together this has enabled an appreciation of the development of the settlement over time and space, of the changing functions, status and economy of individual areas and the settlement as a whole, and the issues of transition, change and finally decline.

The site revealed evidence for activity from the Bronze Age to the post-medieval period. The Late Iron Age, Roman and Saxon material is presented in Volumes 1 and 2, the prehistoric activity has been published in *Britannia* (Atkinson and Preston 2001) and the post-Saxon material (which is negligible) has been incorporated into the archive. The site is located where the Chelmer and Blackwater rivers converge at the head of the Blackwater Estuary, within what was once a large meander of the river Blackwater. It is very low-lying, being sited on the gentle gravel terraces immediately above the coastal marshes.

The evidence for the earliest settlement dates to the Late Iron Age period (mid 1st century BC) and is rather fragmentary in nature. However a centrally located shrine, with a series of strip-plots to the north and south were tentatively identified. This settlement was remodelled around the mid 1st century AD, with the creation of a formal infrastructure of metalled roads, as well as a new temple precinct on the earlier sacred site and a reworking of the strip-plots into enclosures. This remodelling spanned the Late Iron Age/early Roman transition period, although the new road network is tentatively dated to the decade or two preceding the Roman conquest. To the north of the settlement area were a number of burials, pyre sites

and pyre debris dumps. Early Roman cremations were added to this area slightly later. Some of the pyre sites exhibit higher-status elements, and at least one may have been 'aristocratic', suggesting the presence of a local elite.

The later 1st to mid 2nd centuries saw a period of broad continuity and development. With the essential infrastructure already laid down, there was little substantive change made to the roads or to the layout of the settlement, and little change is evident to the functions of individual enclosures. The exception is the temple precinct, which underwent a second phase of remodelling in the early 2nd century with the adjacent areas adopting a support role in relation to it. The finds and the layout of the settlement suggests a decline in its status, with the settlement acting as a large village or small town with a market and religious function. The late 2nd to mid 4th centuries saw occupation activity contracting towards the settlement nucleus, which is conjectured to lie to the west of the temple complex. Much of the remaining area was increasingly given over to peripheral, perhaps purely agricultural, uses and the side roads were gradually going out of use. The evidence for the latest Roman and early Saxon periods is again rather fragmentary, although the continued decline and contraction of the Roman settlement toward its core to the west of the area of investigation is evident. The main thoroughfares may have survived to the end of the Roman period, but all around the infrastructure appears to be fragmenting. However, the religious focus functioned into the late 4th century, when the precinct wall and adjacent monumental post were removed and a substantial building was placed over the former boundary. It is tentatively suggested that the new structure could have been an early Christian chapel.

What remained of the former Roman settlement into the 5th century, and whether there was continuity of occupation into the early Saxon period, is unclear. Early Saxon material, was recovered from across the site and a number of buildings are identified. However, on the basis of the evidence from Elms Farm and from other excavations in the area it is thought that the main focus of the early Saxon settlement was on the marginally higher ground to the north-east in the area of the modern Crescent Road. The final episode of occupation at Elms Farm does not appear to have lasted beyond the 5th century.

The economic focus of Elms Farm appears to have been primarily agricultural, with cereal growing and processing, as well as stock rearing. In the earlier periods wool processing and textile manufacture played an important role in the local economy. The site's estuarine setting provided secondary economic resources, there is evidence for inshore marine fishing and for the harvesting of oysters. A range of manufacturing activities were undertaken, largely on a scale commensurate with the basic requirements of a substantial settlement and its population. This included evidence for metal-working, pottery production, bone-working, and textile manufacture.

It is hoped that the archive, which will be accessible on-line with the Archaeology Data Service (http://archaeol ogydataservice.ac.uk/, doi:10.5284/1021668), will form the basis for future research and re-interpretation.

Résumé

L'établissement de la fin de l'âge du fer, de l'époque romaine et du début de la période saxonne à Elms Farm (Heybridge, Essex) a fait l'objet de fouilles au milieu des années 1990. Cette monographie, Volume 1, se compose de différents chapitres qui traitent du site de façon synthétique. Volume 2, qui comprend les descriptions stratigraphiques, les découvertes et les rapports environnementaux, est publié en parallèle comme monographie numérique dans *Internet Archaeology* (http://intarch.ac.uk/, doi:10.11141/ia.40.1), où il peut être consulté gratuitement. Le site Elms Farm a été fouillé avant la construction d'un grand lotissement par Bovis Homes Ltd.

Toute la zone de développement s'étend sur environ 29 hectares, dont 18 furent plus ou moins fouillés par l'Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU). Les résultats obtenus sont à la mesure des grands moyens mis en œuvre pour les fouilles. On a en effet découvert un bon nombre d'artefacts de qualité dont 6,4 tonnes de poteries datant de la fin de l'âge du fer et de l'époque romaine, 2910 pièces romaines et plus de 9000 ossements animaux. Ces différents éléments ont permis d'évaluer le développement temporel et spatial de l'établissement, l'évolution des fonctions, du statut et de l'économie des zones individuelles et de l'établissement dans son ensemble ainsi que les questions de transition, de changement et finalement de déclin.

Le site a révélé des traces d'activité depuis l'âge du bronze jusqu'à la période postmédiévale. Les objets de la fin de l'âge du fer, des époques romaines et saxonnes sont présentés dans les volumes 1 et 2, l'activité préhistorique est analysée dans *Britannia* (Atkinson et Preston 2001) et les objets (en quantité négligeable) postérieurs à la période saxonne sont mentionnés dans les archives. Le site se trouve au lieu de convergence des rivières Chelmer et Blackwater, à la pointe de l'estuaire de la rivière Blackwater et à l'intérieur de ce qui fut autrefois un grand méandre de cette rivière. Situé nettement en contrebas, le site domine les marais côtiers et s'étend sur de douces terrasses graveleuses.

Les vestiges du plus ancien établissement remontent à la fin de l'âge du fer (milieu du premier siècle avant notre ère) et ils sont plutôt de nature fragmentaire. Toutefois, il a été possible d'identifier provisoirement un autel situé au centre du site et présentant un ensemble de bandes de terre au nord et au sud a été provisoirement identifié. Cet emplacement a été remodelé vers le milieu du premier siècle de notre ère. Cela s'est traduit par la création concertée d'une infrastructure de routes pourvues d'un revêtement, d'une nouvelle enceinte de temple sur le site sacré préexistant et par une transformation des bandes de terre en enceintes. Ce remodelage a eu lieu pendant la période de transition entre la fin de l'âge du fer et le début de l'époque romaine, bien que le nouveau réseau routier

soit provisoirement daté d'une ou deux décennies précédant la conquête romaine. Au nord de l'établissement, on trouve un certain nombre de tombes et d'emplacements de bûchers avec leurs amas de débris. Des crémations du début de la période romaine ont été ajoutées à cette zone peu de temps après. Certains des emplacements de bûcher contiennent des éléments de statut plus élevé, l'un d'entre eux au moins étant peut-être de nature « aristocratique », ce qui suggère la présence d'une élite locale.

La période comprise entre la fin du premier siècle et le milieu du deuxième siècle se caractérise par la poursuite d'un développement important. L'essentiel de l'infrastructure étant désormais en place, les routes et la disposition de l'établissement présentent peu de changements notables, de même que les fonctions des enceintes individuelles n'ont que légèrement variées. L'enceinte du temple constitue toutefois une exception. Elle a en effet connue une deuxième phase de remodelage au début du 2ème siècle, les zones adjacentes remplissant un rôle de soutien. Les découvertes et la disposition de l'établissement suggèrent qu'il s'est produit une perte de statut, l'établissement remplissant le rôle d'un village ou d'une petite ville dotée d'un marché et d'une fonction religieuse. Pendant la période comprise entre la fin du 2ème siècle et le milieu du 4ème siècle, il s'est produit un recentrement de l'activité vers le cœur de l'établissement, qui pourrait se situer à l'ouest du complexe du temple. Une grande partie de la zone restante s'est de plus en plus tournée vers des usages périphériques qui étaient peut-être uniquement agricoles. En outre, les routes secondaires furent progressivement abandonnées. Les traces de la dernière période romaine et de la première période saxonne sont à nouveau plutôt fragmentaires. Toutefois, on distingue clairement le déclin continu de l'établissement romain et son recentrement vers le cœur situé à l'ouest de la zone d'investigation. Les principales voies de communication se sont peut-être maintenues jusqu'à la fin de la période romaine, mais tout autour, l'infrastructure semble fragmentaire. Toutefois, la

dimension religieuse a perduré jusqu'à la fin du 4ème siècle. Le mur d'enceinte et le poteau monumental voisin furent alors détruits et un important bâtiment fut construit sur l'ancienne limite. Il semblerait que cette nouvelle structure soit une chapelle du début de l'ère chrétienne.

Que reste-t-il au 5ème siècle des traces de la première occupation romaine et l'occupation des lieux a-t-elle perduré jusqu'au début de la période saxonne ? Il est difficile de répondre à ces questions. Des objets de la première période saxonne ont été mis à jour à différents endroits du site et plusieurs bâtiments ont été identifiés. Toutefois, si l'on s'appuie sur les vestiges découverts lors des fouilles effectuées à Elms Farm et aux alentours, on est amené à penser qu'au cours de la première période saxonne, l'activité de l'établissement était surtout concentrée sur le terrain situé légèrement en hauteur au nord-est de la zone moderne de Crescent Road. Il semble qu'Elms Farm n'ait pas été occupé au-delà du 5ème siècle.

Selon toute vraisemblance, l'activité économique d'Elms Farm concernait principalement l'agriculture et plus précisément la culture et la transformation de céréales ainsi que l'élevage de bétail. Au cours des périodes les plus anciennes, le traitement de la laine et la fabrication de textile ont joué un rôle important dans l'économie locale. La présence d'un estuaire sur le site a permis le développement de ressources économiques d'appoint. On trouve ainsi des traces de récolte des huîtres et de pêche dans les eaux intérieures de l'estuaire. Diverses activités de fabrication ont été développées. Dans une large mesure, elles ont permis de satisfaire les besoins essentiels d'un grand établissement et de sa population. On a ainsi trouvé des traces du travail des os et du métal, de production de poterie ainsi que de fabrication de textile.

On peut espérer que les archives, qui seront accessibles en ligne sur le site de l'Archaeology Data Service (http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/, doi:10.5284/1021668), serviront de base à de futures recherches et à de nouvelles interprétations.

(Traduction: Didier Don)

Zusammenfassung

Die späteisenzeitliche, römerzeitliche und frühangelsächsische Siedlung bei Elms Farm in Heybridge, Essex, wurde Mitte der 1990er Jahre ausgegraben. Die vorliegende Monografie (Band 1) enthält Synthesekapitel mit Erläuterungen zu der Stätte. Der parallel dazu vorgelegte Band 2, in dem die stratigrafischen Beschreibungen sowie die Befunde und Umweltberichte dargelegt sind, ist als digitale Monografie in der kostenlos zugänglichen Online-Publikation *Internet Archaeology* (http://intarch.ac.uk/, doi:10.11141/ia.40.1) veröffentlicht. Die Ausgrabungen bei Elms Farm fanden vor dem Bau einer großen Wohnsiedlung durch Bovis Homes Ltd statt.

Die gesamte Bebauungsfläche nahm circa 29 Hektar ein, von denen rund 18 Hektar von der Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) unterschiedlich intensiv untersucht wurden. Die umfangreichen Ausgrabungen förderten einen substanziellen und bedeutsamen Artefaktkomplex zutage, der unter anderem

6,4 Tonnen späteisenzeitliche und römische Keramik, 2910 römische Münzen und über 9000 Tierknochen umfasst. Anhand der Funde war es möglich, die zeitliche und räumliche Entwicklung der Siedlung, ihre sich mit der Zeit wandelnden Funktionen und gewerblichen Aktivitäten in den einzelnen Bereichen und der Siedlung als Ganzes sowie ihren sich ändernden Status und die Übergänge, Veränderungen und letztlich den Niedergang der Siedlung zu bewerten.

Auf dem Gelände fanden sich Siedlungsnachweise von der Bronzezeit bis ins Nachmittelalter. Die späteisenzeitlichen, römerzeitlichen und angelsächsischen Befunde sind in den Bänden 1 und 2 dargelegt, die prähistorische Nutzung wurde in *Britannia* (Atkinson und Preston 2001) beschrieben und die (geringfügigen) Funde aus der nachangelsächsischen Zeit gingen ins Archiv ein. Die Stätte liegt am Zusammenfluss der Flüsse Chelmer und Blackwater in die Blackwater-Mündung, die einst eine

große Flussschleife darstellte. Sie befindet sich auf einem sehr tiefliegenden Gebiet auf flach ansteigenden Kiesterrassen direkt über der Küstenmarsch.

Die nur vereinzelten Spuren der ältesten Besiedlung datieren in die späte Eisenzeit (Mitte des 1. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.). Vorläufige Befunde sind ein zentral gelegener Schrein mit einer Reihe von Streifenparzellen im Norden und im Süden. Die Siedlung wurde um die Mitte des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. umgestaltet – es entstand eine formale Infrastruktur aus befestigten Straßen, die ältere heilige Stätte wurde durch einen neuen Tempelbezirk überlagert und aus den Streifenparzellen wurden Einhegungen. All dies geschah in der Übergangszeit von der späten Eisenzeit zur frühen Römerzeit, wobei das neue Straßennetz womöglich zehn bis zwanzig Jahre vor der römischen Eroberung angelegt wurde. Nördlich des Siedlungsgebiets fanden sich mehrere Gräber, Verbrennungsstätten und Brandschuttgruben. Etwas später kamen frührömische Brandgräber hin. Einige der Verbrennungsstätten wiesen Elemente auf, die auf einen hohen Status hinweisen – mindestens eines war vermutlich »aristokratischer« Natur, was auf eine örtliche Elite schließen lässt.

Die Zeit vom Ende des 1. bis zur Mitte des 2. Jahrhunderts war im Wesentlichen durch Kontinuität und Entwicklung geprägt. Da bereits eine grundlegende Infrastruktur bestand, wurden die Straßen und der Grundriss der Siedlung nur unwesentlich verändert, und auch die Funktion der einzelnen Einhegungen änderte sich kaum. Eine Ausnahme bildet der Tempelbezirk, der im frühen 2. Jahrhundert einer zweiten Umgestaltung unterzogen wurde, bei der die angrenzenden Bereiche eine Begleitfunktion erhielten. Die Funde und der Grundriss der Siedlung deuten auf einen Statusverlust hin – die Siedlung war nun ein großes Dorf oder eine kleine Stadt, die als Markt- und Religionsstätte diente. In der Zeit vom Ende des 2. bis zur Mitte des 4. Jahrhunderts reduzierte sich die Siedlungstätigkeit auf den Kern des Ortes, der westlich des Tempelkomplexes vermutet wird. Große Teile des restlichen Gebiets wurden zunehmend peripheren, womöglich rein landwirtschaftlichen Tätigkeiten zugeführt, und die Nebenstraßen wurden immer weniger genutzt. Für die letzte Phase der Römerzeit und die frühangelsächsische Periode liegen erneut nur bruchstückhafte Befunde vor, obwohl ein weiterer Niedergang und ein Rückzug der Römersiedlung auf ihr Zentrum westlich des Untersuchungsgebiets erkennbar sind. Die wichtigsten Durchgangsstraßen könnten bis zum Ende der Römerzeit bestanden haben, allerdings verlor die umliegende Infrastruktur offenbar an Bedeutung. Dennoch blieb der religiöse Fokus bis ins späte 4. Jahrhundert hinein bestehen. Danach wurden die Außenmauer und die angrenzende monumentale Säule entfernt und durch ein massives Bauwerk ersetzt, das über die vormaligen Begrenzungen hinausreichte. Vorläufigen Annahmen zufolge könnte es sich um eine frühchristliche Kapelle gehandelt haben.

Unklar ist, was von der ehemaligen Römersiedlung bis ins 5. Jahrhundert erhalten blieb und ob die Besiedlung in der angelsächsischen Frühzeit fortbestand. Auf dem gesamten Areal wurde frühangelsächsisches Material gefunden und mehrere Gebäude identifiziert. Die bei Elms Farm und anderen Ausgrabungen in dem Gebiet entdeckten Befunde geben jedoch Grund zu der Annahme, dass die frühangelsächsische Siedlung vornehmlich auf das etwas höher gelegene Gelände weiter nordöstlich im Bereich der heutigen Crescent Road konzentriert war. Die letzte Phase der Besiedlung bei Elms Farm ging augenscheinlich im 5. Jahrhundert zu Ende.

Der wirtschaftliche Fokus der Siedlung bei Elms Farm lag offenbar vorwiegend auf der Landwirtschaft – Getreideanbau und -verarbeitung – sowie der Tierzucht. In der Zeit davor waren die Wollverarbeitung und die Textilherstellung ein wichtiger Bestandteil der lokalen Wirtschaft. Aufgrund der Lage des Ortes im Mündungs-gebiet gab es auch wirtschaftliche Sekundärressourcen – es fanden sich Hinweise auf Küsten- und Austernfischerei. Auch zahlreiche handwerkliche Tätigkeiten wurden ausgeübt, die vornehmlich auf die Grundbedürfnisse einer größeren Siedlung und ihrer Bevölkerung ausgerichtet waren. Dazu zählten die Metallverarbeitung, Töpfer-arbeiten, das Knochenhandwerk und die Textilherstellung.

Es ist zu hoffen, dass das Archiv, das online über den Archaeology Data Service (http://archaeology dataservice.ac.uk/, doi:10.5284/1021668) zugänglich gemacht wird, die Grundlage für künftige Forschungen und Neuinterpretationen bilden wird.

(Übersetzung: Gerlinde Krug)

Chapter 1. Introduction

I. Site location
(Fig. 1.1)

The Elms Farm site (EHER 17444, NGR TL8503 0805) is located on the western periphery of Heybridge, immediately to the north-west of Maldon, in Essex (Fig. 1.1). It was part of a total development area of *c.* 29ha (71.6 acres) which extended north and east from the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation as far as Langford, Crescent and Holloway Roads. Some 18ha were subject to varying degrees of investigation by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU), in two phases of work, 1993 and 1994–5, in advance of residential development by Bovis Homes Ltd.

II. Topography, geology and land use
(Fig. 1.2)

The site lies at the head of the Blackwater Estuary, immediately north of the flood plain of the rivers Chelmer and Blackwater as they head for the estuary. It is at this point that the rivers run closest together and have joined at various points in the past (Wickenden 1986, 7).

The natural topography has been significantly altered and obscured by post-medieval developments. The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, constructed in 1797, canalised parts of both rivers and significantly altered the drainage pattern of the whole area. The Elms Farm site is now cut off from the rivers by the disused branches of the Great Eastern Railway and the recent Maldon by-pass, which overlies parts of the railway embankments. However, as Wickenden showed (1986, figs 2 and 9) prior to these developments, the site was located within what was once a large meander of the river Blackwater. The site occupies the first and second gravel terraces, which slope gently down to the rivers, falling only some 2.8m over the 900m from the north to south end of the site (Fig. 1.2).

A relict water channel is present at the foot of the terrace step, running east to west across Area B, which once drained into the Blackwater. Along the terrace step itself is a spring line at *c.* 3.3m OD. Exacerbated by the alluvial silts and clays of the channel, springs and underground streams produce seasonal flooding in this field (Area B). The most southerly field (Area C) is within the river floodplain and at 2.5–2.7m OD is poorly drained, while central areas of the site are relatively well drained.

The surface geology varies in relation to the changing site topography. The geology of the upper terrace is essentially firm river gravels, though both aerial photographs and excavation revealed geological surface features of glacial origin, in the form of sporadic pockets of brickearth and more extensive areas of clay. Some of these clay areas appear to be waterlain and may have been laid down by the springs and relict channels noted above. The geology of the lower terrace is more mixed. Although generally gravelly, and particularly so in the central and southern parts of the site, often extensive deposits of brickearth are present. The floodplain deposits in Area C

were found to be in excess of 2m deep and comprise grey-blue waterlain clays. Over the entire area, the geology and archaeology is covered by 0.25–0.40m of pebbly loam topsoil.

Land use was closely related to the geology and topology of the upper and lower terraces. Prior to excavation, the site area was farmland. The well-drained upper terrace was under arable cultivation while the lower terrace was exclusively pasture, reflecting the natural drainage and soils of these two areas. Documentary and cartographic evidence indicate that this topographic division was present since at least the early 19th century, as were the major field boundaries.

III. Previous knowledge of the site
(Fig. 1.3)

Prior to these investigations, a search of the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER; formerly the Sites and Monuments Record or SMR) returned thirty-eight references of relevance to the project. Fourteen of these sites are found in close proximity to Elms Farm. Since they are summarised in Wickenden's gazetteer of sites and finds from Heybridge (1986, 53–61) they need no further description here. Of these known remains, only a single series of cropmarks was actually within the development area.

EHER 7801 (NMR TL8408/1/196, TL8408/3/413 and TL8408/4/425) comprised a series of linear and discrete cropmarks covering approximately 8ha, the majority of which occupied the area of the 1993 site (Fig. 1.1). The linear cropmarks were interpreted as probable Late Iron Age and Romano-British field systems. A large number of pit-like cropmarks were clustered in the south-east corner of this complex; these appeared to be roughly rectangular, to share a common alignment, and to overlie the linear features (Pl. 1.1). All were investigated during the 1993 excavation, within what was called Area W (Fig. 1.6). The cropmarks to the south of the 1993 site are undated, but are considered to be of probable Late Iron Age and Roman date.

Since the late 19th century various sites and casual findspots of prehistoric, Late Iron Age, Roman and Saxon date have been discovered during gravel extraction and small-scale development. Although there are references to the finding of material as early as 1839 (Anon 1839, 89), the most significant early discovery was made in 1887 during the construction of a branch of the Great Eastern Railway line and creation of a gravel pit (now a pond), at Langford Junction (Fig. 1.3), immediately to the south-west of the site. Local antiquarian E.A. Fitch recorded that large amounts ('barrowloads') of Roman and Belgic pottery, including a significant proportion of imported wares, together with hundreds of coins and much other metalwork, were discovered during this work (Fitch 1905). Largely on the strength of Fitch's report, Heybridge acquired a reputation as a port involved in continental trade.
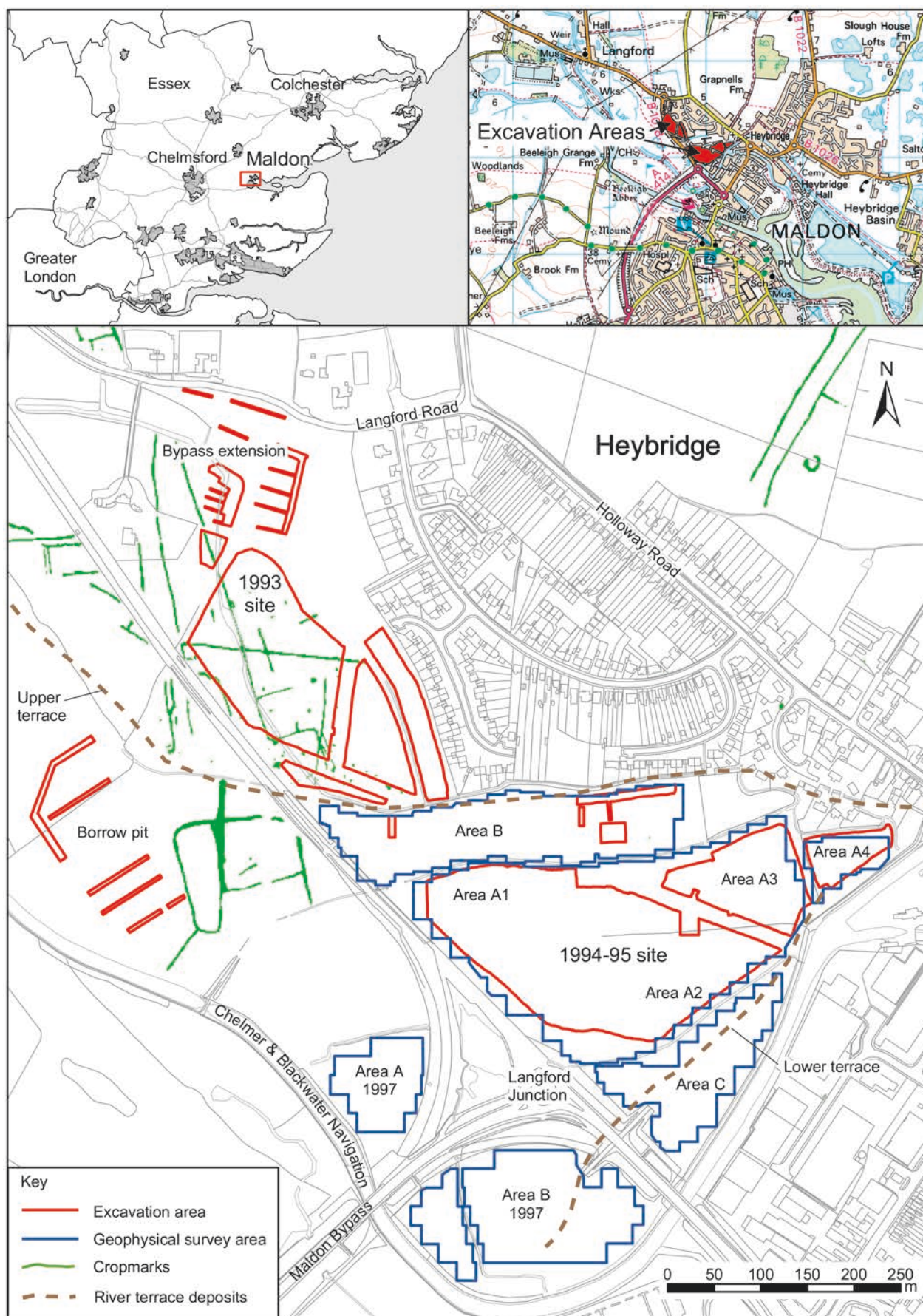
Figure 1.1 Location plan
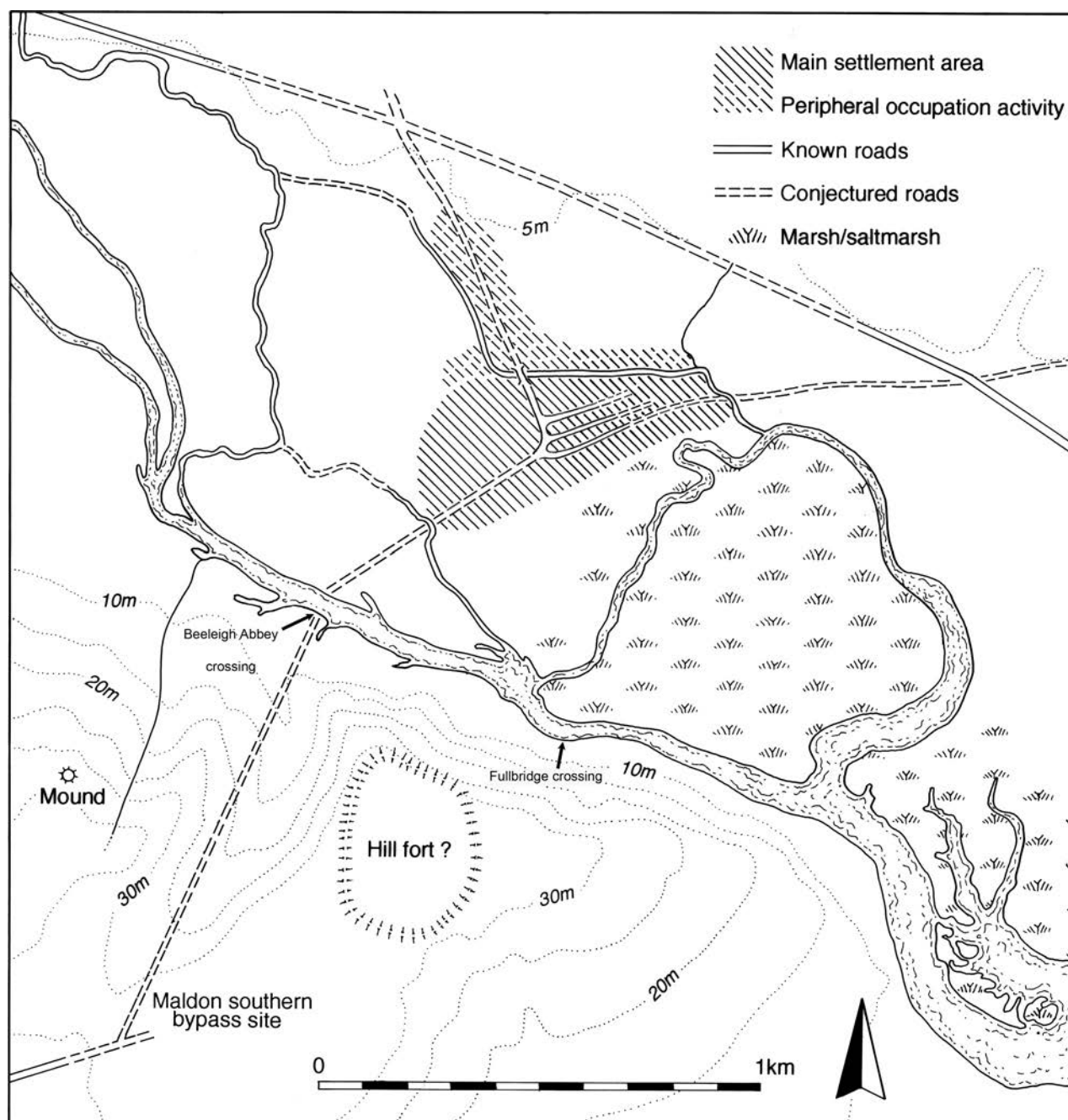
Figure 1.2 Topography of the site

Cemetery evidence was brought to light during the late 19th and early 20th centuries with burials being discovered at various locations to the east of the site, around 600m away. These included Late Iron Age cremations from the Heybridge Cemetery and inhumations in lead and stone coffins from The Towers (Fig. 1.4).

Since 1967, formal archaeological excavation has taken place to the north and north-east of the Elms Farm site in advance of housing developments (Fig. 1.3). The most significant of these was Drury's Crescent Road excavation in 1971–2 (Drury and Wickenden 1982; Wickenden 1986), immediately to the north of the 1994–5 excavation. The site spanned the Late Bronze Age to early Saxon periods with deposits of Roman date comparable to those excavated across the Elms Farm site, including

numerous post-holes, pits, ditches and gravel surfaces. Evidence of Roman occupation spanned the 1st to 4th centuries AD and elements of this were interpreted as a street frontage. The early Saxon occupation was more substantial, represented by five sunken-featured buildings and a possible post-built structure, all dated to the early 5th century AD. It was from Drury's work that Heybridge acquired the label of a 'small town', leading to the settlement being incorporated into the perceived pattern of Trinovantian towns (Rodwell 1975). It was also cited as an example of probable later Roman to early Saxon settlement continuity (Wickenden 1986).

At 39–45 Crescent Road (Roy 2003) excavation revealed Middle and Late Bronze Age burials as well as evidence of Middle Iron Age activity. There were two phases of Late Iron Age roundhouse construction. In the

Late Iron Age or Roman period the site was subdivided by drainage channels to form a narrow strip plot which ran south, perhaps down to the palaeochannel. A 2nd-century cremation suggests that the plot lay on the fringes of the settlement, whilst abundant building material suggests a house lay in the vicinity. In the late Roman period a substantial east-to-west ditch was dug, demarcating the edge of the well-drained gravels. Other features of this date included a timber-lined well and a corn-drier. Few features could be securely dated to the Saxon period, but they did include two possible sunken-featured buildings. Immediately to the north of this site, a watching-brief following the demolition of 41 Crescent Road (Roy 2002) found two pits and a post-hole, which contained artefacts of Saxon and possibly Roman dates. To the north-east at 35 Crescent Road (Wickenden 1986, 59) a spread of Roman material was observed in 1986, possibly associated with a ditch. Around 200m to the north-west at 48 Crescent Road (Hogan and House 2007) an evaluation revealed evidence of Romano-British activity in the form of probable quarry pits and boundary features.

At Boucherne's Farm, some 200m to the north-east of the 1994 area, small-scale excavations and a watching brief were conducted in 1983 by the Maldon Archaeology Group (Wickenden 1986, 60). The site produced evidence of both Late Iron Age and Romano-British occupation in the form of boundary ditches and a concentration of unstratified pottery.

More recently, an evaluation to the south of Holloway Road, on the northern perimeter of the development area, was undertaken by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust Ltd in March 1993 (Timby 1993). Trial trenches revealed a number of Middle Iron Age pits sealed by a deposit of gravel thought to be of Roman date, and Roman ditches. This ensemble of features is comparable to those in the northern part of Areas A2 and A3 of the Elms Farm site.

Plate 1.1 Aerial photograph of Elms Farm showing cropmarks
(copyright NMR827, frame 413, NGR TL8408/3, 9 July 1975)

Timby concluded that the area had not been significantly disturbed since the Roman period. Further excavation was not undertaken because the ground surface was to be raised prior to construction.

Cotswold Archaeological Trust also carried out an area excavation at Langford Road, immediately to the north-east of the 1993 site (Langton and Holbrook 1997). In addition to features of prehistoric date, it contained evidence of Late Iron Age, Roman and possibly Saxon occupation activity.

IV. The site in its wider context

The local context of the site is shown on Fig. 1.4.

The distribution patterns of a number of Late Iron Age artefact types types (*e.g.* coins (Haselgrove 1987; Collis 1984) would suggest that the site lies on the boundary between two economic areas. Collis' assessment of the influence of Camulodunum on the surrounding area (Collis 1984, 155–61, fig.9–21), placed Heybridge in the outer core of the local trading zone where direct contact with the *oppidum* was assumed, the periphery of this zone being defined by the distribution of gold coinage. In addition it was seen as peripheral to a north Essex zone where imports are common and a south Essex zone where they are virtually absent (Rodwell 1976, figs 18, 43 and 45).

An extensive cropmark landscape extends for several kilometres along the gravel terraces on the north side of the Blackwater, from Ulting and Woodham Walter in the west to Goldhanger in the east (see Wallis and Waughman 1998, figs 127–131). The site lies in the south-central part of this complex. Many of the cropmark enclosures and field systems appear to be of Late Iron Age and Roman date, indicating intensive exploitation of the fertile soils of the terraces. Areas of this complex have already been examined in advance of gravel quarrying, most notably at Lofts Farm, Slough House Farm, Chigborough Farm and Howells Farm (Wallis and Waughman 1998), confirming the Late Iron Age and Roman dates of many such features.
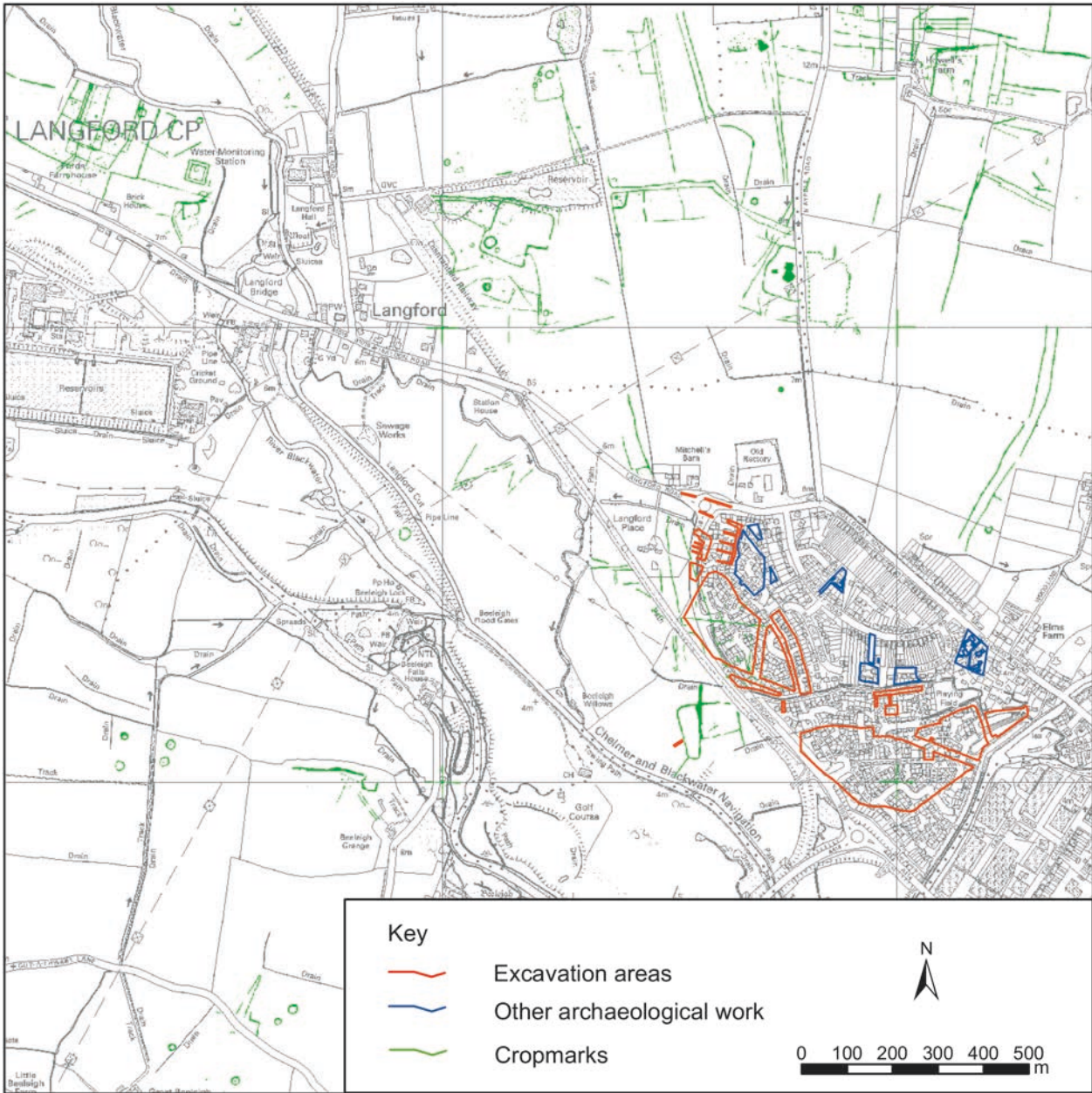
Figure 1.3 Location of previous archaeological discoveries and cropmarks in the vicinity of Elms Farm

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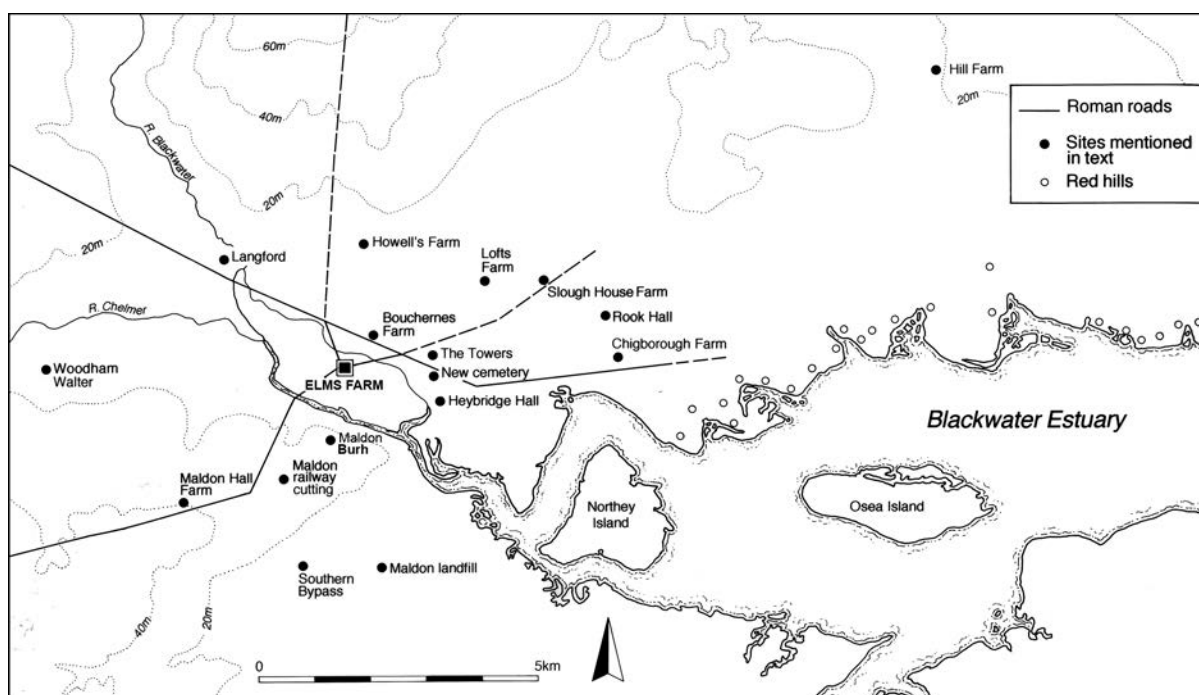
Figure 1.4 Archaeological sites of the Blackwater valley

The territory of the Trinovantes is thought to include a large number of Roman 'small towns' or secondary settlements located on a developed road network, particularly at river crossings. Despite a review of these settlements (Rodwell 1975), their part in the 'Romanisation' of the area, functions, and relationship with rural sites is not yet properly understood. Large-scale excavations in Chelmsford showed that development there was strongly influenced by the *mansio*, and the same may be true of Kelvedon. Colchester and Great Chesterford are also atypical, as a colonia and probable military base, respectively. Elsewhere in the region, excavations on small town sites (*e.g.* Coggeshall and Braintree) have produced insufficient data to address the question. Prior to the Elms Farm excavation, Heybridge was considered to be an important trading centre, linking the rural hinterland with coastal trade (Wickenden 1986, 46 and 64). The major cropmark complex mentioned above is also known to include a possible villa and possible temple compound at Langford, 2km to the north-west of the present site.

The evidence of the excavations already listed indicated that the Roman conquest had a varying effect on the rural settlement of the area. For instance, at Slough House Farm, a large settlement and its field system were abandoned at or soon after the conquest; whilst at Chigborough Farm, only 1km away, Late Iron Age agricultural activity continued uninterrupted (Wallis and Waughman 1998). Numerous Red Hill (salt-making) sites are known from the Blackwater Estuary (Fawn *et al.* 1990).

It is not surprising to find Saxon settlement in the Blackwater Estuary at Heybridge as the river provides an excellent access route to agriculturally viable land. Saxon settlement in Essex shows a distinctly riverine distribution, occurring along the major river valleys of the Thames, Roach, Crouch, Colne and Blackwater. The major settlement at Mucking is situated on the Boyn Hill gravel terrace on the north side of the Thames river valley,

where good quality arable and marsh for grazing lie close at hand. Likewise, the Blackwater Estuary had resources to exploit: arable land, marsh and the river itself. Extensive systems of middle Saxon fish weirs are known from the Blackwater Estuary (Hall and Clarke 2000). In addition to agriculture, a major early Saxon iron-working complex has been excavated at Rook Hall (Adkins 1989). This complex extended onto the adjacent Slough House Farm site, where, under waterlogged conditions, two contemporary timber-lined wells were recorded, providing excellent environmental data (Wallis and Waughman 1998).

V. Fieldwork

Geophysical survey
The identification of extensive cropmarks across the 1993 site was aided by the well-drained upper gravel terrace soils and cereal crop. However, the rough and relatively damp pasture of the 1994 site was not conducive to the development and photography of cropmarks. The only feature apparent on the aerial photographs was the relict watercourse that ran across the north of this area (Area B). In order to evaluate the potential of the lower terrace, other non-intrusive methods of investigation were employed, as it was not possible at that time to trench the area.

Geophysical Surveys of Bradford were commissioned to undertake a pilot geophysical survey in July 1993. Successful detection of anomalies by magnetic survey led to the commissioning of a *c.* 13ha gradiometer survey of the 1994 site (Stage III, Table 1.1) in September 1993. A further stage of gradiometer survey was undertaken by the ECC Field Archaeology Unit, in 1997, as part of the post-excavation analysis of the site. This took place on two areas of land outside the development area, to the south and west of the 1994 site, and amounted to *c.* 3.3ha in extent. The full reports are presented in Volume 2, but the survey results are summarised below.

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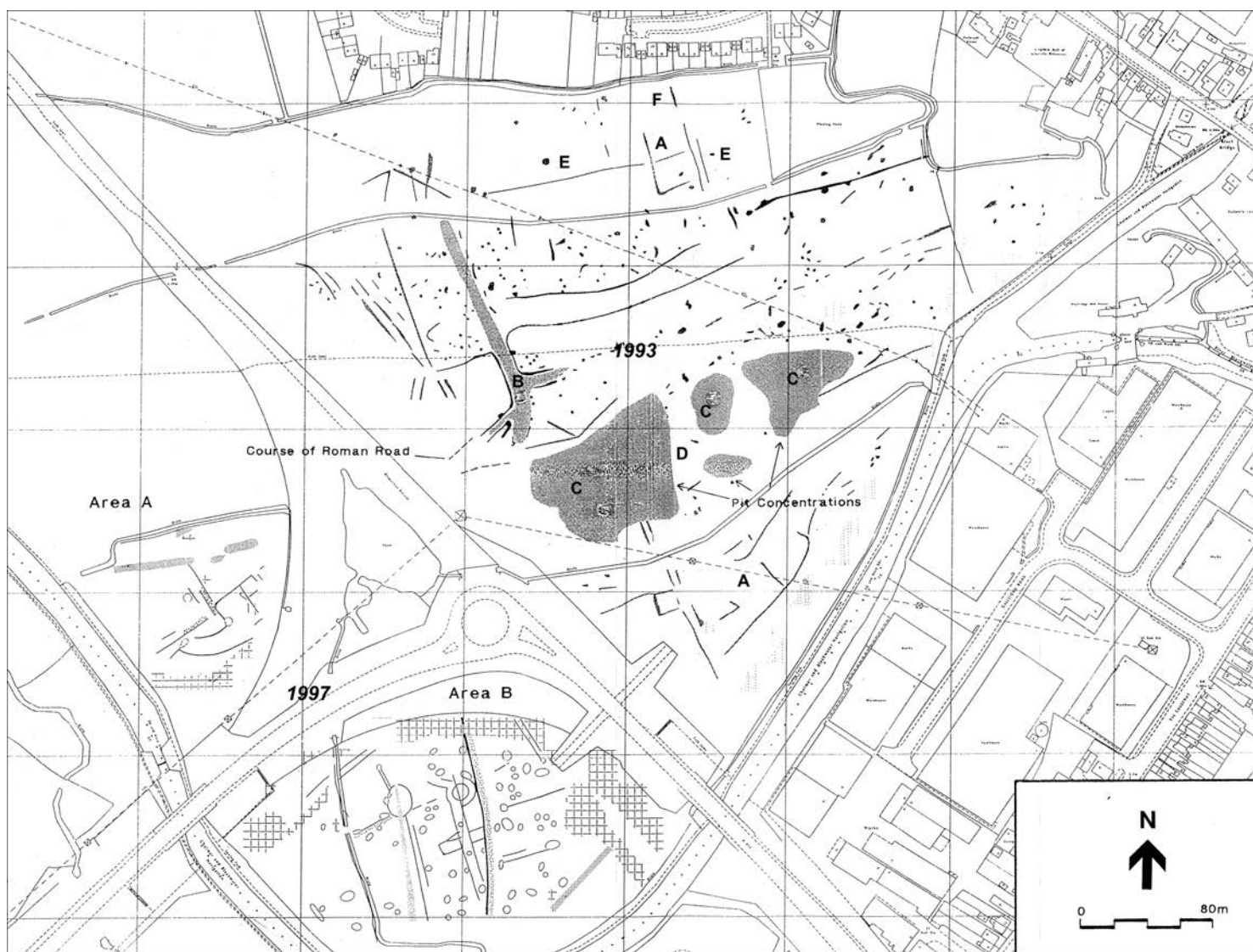
Figure 1.5 Interpretation plot of the geophysical surveys

1993 geophysical survey
(Fig. 1.5)
This work identified a high density of anomalies interpreted as archaeological features across the whole area and extending beyond the limits of the site (Fig. 1.5). Within the data, two distinct trends in alignment could be clearly discerned, one running south-west to north-east and the other north-west to south-east. Many of the anomalies indicated linear ditches, some of which possibly formed enclosures (Fig. 1.5, A). This was particularly evident in the north and south extremes of the survey area. The alignment of these features was similar to that of the cropmarks in Area W (Fig. 1.6), suggesting that they were all part of the same complex.

Part of the postulated Roman road was located by the survey (Fig. 1.5, B), highlighted by apparent flanking ditches and by the lack of anomalies along its length, suggesting a surface of some kind. However, the composite plot shows that it was not detected in the northern field (Area B). This was presumably due to the waterlogging of this vicinity which had deposited a layer of clay across parts of the site. A number of junctions, roughly at right-angles to the road, could also be

discerned. These corresponded with many of the linear anomalies and were interpreted to indicate minor roads or trackways along which the enclosures lay. The survey report drew attention to a 60m-wide band of strong pit-like anomalies (Fig. 1.5, C) running north-east to south-west across the site. Within this there appeared to be distinct areas without anomalies (Fig. 1.5, D) which are aligned north-west to south-east. It was suggested that the strong responses were associated with buildings and that the quiet areas represented streets, though natural causes such as magnetic gravels were not discounted. Due to their orientation, it was more likely that they were archaeological. Several large pit-like responses (Fig. 1.5, E) may have represented sunken-featured buildings, which lay close to the excavated examples from Crescent Road.

The survey also identified a curving area of strong responses in the northern field (Area B). This coincided with a depression in the ground and was interpreted as a former stream channel, perhaps of significance to the Roman settlement. However, observation of the field showed that the stream was still at least seasonally active and probably associated with the known springs in the

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vicinity. One further large area of anomaly, in the extreme north-east corner of the survey area (Area A4, Fig. 1.1) was the result of post-medieval quarrying, an interpretation supported by evidence from the contour survey and observation of the field surface.

1997 geophysical survey
Additional survey work in 1997 was intended to produce an insight into the eastward spread of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement. It identified a range of magnetic anomalies interpreted as archaeological features across the whole 4ha area of investigation (Fig. 1.5). The western area was situated opposite the main site, on the other side of Langford Junction pond. The survey showed that road surfaces and probable flanking occupation remains continued in this direction. The south area included linear features and a higher density of likely pitting and indicated that settlement activity extended at least as far as the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.

Trial trenching
While no intrusive evaluation work was undertaken prior to the excavation of the 1993 site, a limited programme of trial trenching was carried out in areas peripheral to the 1993 site and across the 1994 site. The latter work was designed to verify and improve upon the results of the magnetometer survey undertaken by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford.

The trenching of the 1993 site was undertaken in two areas beyond the known cropmark complex of the main field: one area within the land take of the proposed bypass extension and the second within the area of a proposed gravel borrow-pit to the west of the disused railway embankment. Those trenches in the intended position of the gravel pit contained no archaeological features or deposits, bottoming onto a thick layer of orange clay that overlay gravel. The trenches to the north of the 1993 site, in the proposed bypass land take, revealed only a single archaeological feature. Ditch 303 was a 2m-wide and 0.6m-deep cut that ran on a north-west to south-east alignment. Its silty clay fills appeared to be the result of natural silting and contained tile and a small quantity of early Roman pottery. This ditch almost certainly related to features later found on the Langford Road site.

Within the 1994 site, a total of eight trial trenches (Trenches 1 to 8) of varying size were dug across Areas A, B and C (Fig. 1.1). The trench positions were chosen to coincide with the possible roads, roadsides and plot interiors suggested by the geophysical surveys. Archaeological remains were found in all of the trenches. The machined surfaces were cleaned and planned.

Recognised features and deposits were briefly described. Artefactual material was collected but none of the trial trenches was formally excavated. As such, these small, isolated blocks of archaeology present limited scope for interpretation but where appropriate, the trial trenches are included on plans of the area excavations and discussed in the site narrative in the Volume 2 report. However, three of the trial trenches were located in areas in which no subsequent area excavation was undertaken. These trenches constitute our only insight into the nature of the archaeology at these points and so merit consideration here.

Trial trenches 1 and 2
Trial trenches 1 and 2 were narrow machine-cut trenches measuring approximately 2×20m and located in the northernmost field of the 1994 site (Area B). Aligned north to south, both were positioned across the line of the relict watercourse that ran through the area. Trench 1 comprised blue-grey waterlain clay deposits with a single Saxon pot sherd from the surface. In Trench 2 dark grey silty clay and gravel was exposed. It contained Roman tile and pottery sherds throughout the 0.8m of homogenous waterlogged deposits removed by machine, but no features were visible within them.

Trial trench 8
Located in the southernmost field of the 1994 site (Area C), Trench 8 was a 10m square in what was the lowest-lying part of the site. Beneath the topsoil a 0.1–0.25m-thick layer of clean, artefact-free, blue-grey clay was removed to expose a homogenous deposit of dark grey silty clay and gravel. Part of this was machine excavated to a depth of *c.* 1m at which point a large animal leg-bone (probably of a cow) was exposed. No further features or artefacts were observed within this waterlogged deposit.

These eight trial trenches showed that the geophysical survey was correct in its broad interpretations of the magnetic anomalies recorded, but in total the trenches covered only 0.6% of the *c.* 13ha 1994 development area. The excavations were of insufficient scale to reveal the sheer density, depth and complexity of the settlement remains. This was compounded by the unlucky positioning of the individual trial trenches in relatively uninformative positions of either homogenous silt layers or in areas of relatively simple archaeology. The latter is exemplified by Trial trench 7 which was positioned almost entirely *within* what was later found to be the circumference of the Roman temples in Excavation Area J, giving no indication of the complexity of the temple precinct as a whole.

Site Code	Development Stage	Development Area	Site Sub-division	Excavation Areas
HYEF 93	Stage I	-	-	Area W
		-	-	Northern trial trenches
	Stage II	-	-	Western trial trenches
HYEF 94–5	Stage III	Area A	A1	Areas D to K
			A2	Areas L to P
			A3	-
			A4	Area Q
		Area B	-	Area R
			-	Trial trenches 1 and 2
		Area C	-	Trial trench 8

Table 1.1 Hierarchy of site sub-divisions

The excavations

The 1993 and 1994–5 sites were investigated as two separate projects each with very different archaeological content and this is reflected in the differing approaches to excavation strategy and sampling undertaken.

Site areas
(Table 1.1, Fig. 1.6)
During the course of pre-excavation planning, fieldwork and post-excavation analysis, a hierarchy of different codes was evolved to aid reference to general and specific areas of the site (Table 1.1 and Fig. 1.6). The developer's scheme of works imposed the first three levels of subdivisions which laid out the sequence of earth moving, stockpiling and development. Stages I to III more or less coincided with the two phases of archaeological excavation. Stage I contained the 1993 excavation and the trial trenching to its north. Stage II contained the trial trenching undertaken in advance of gravel extraction. Stage III contained the 1994/5 excavation. The largest of these, Phase III, was subdivided by necessity into general Development Areas A to C, of which Area A was further subdivided into Areas A1 to A4.

For the purposes of archaeological excavation and the practicalities of allocating teams of excavators to tangible areas of the site, particularly as it became clear that sampling of the entire area could not be achieved, individual excavated areas within A1 to A4 were given an alphabetic code (Areas D to R, omitting the letter O). This was later extended during post-excavation analysis to the 1993 site where all area excavation was accorded the identifying label of Area W.

The 1993 excavations
Given the negative results from the trial trenching undertaken in the north and west of the site, only the central field, an area of some 3.8ha was selected for area excavation (Fig. 1.1). Truncation had clearly occurred as a result of modern ploughing and so all topsoil and subsoil was removed down onto the natural gravel. Within the stripped area, sampling of all features was undertaken, except where flooding prevented work in the south-eastern corner of the site. Discrete features such as pits and post-holes were excavated to a minimum of 50% of the feature and larger features such as ditches sectioned as appropriate, although given the length of some of these, it was not possible to investigate these to a standard percentage. Features deemed to be of particular interest, notably a prehistoric ring-ditch, pottery kilns, and cremations were excavated to a higher degree, often to 100%.

The 1993 excavations revealed a substantial part of the hinterland/infields located immediately to the north of the main Late Iron Age and Roman settlement area. Within these there was evidence for crop processing, pottery manufacturing, funerary and burial practice, and possible reuse in the early Saxon period.

The 1994–5 excavations
(Fig. 1.7)
The excavations in 1994–5 consisted of the large-scale excavation of much of the lower gravel terrace portion of the development area (Figs 1.1, 1.6 and 1.7). The evidence from the geophysics and trial trenching had already established that this area comprised the eastern half of an extensive occupation site, which may have stretched as far west as the marshes bordering the river Chelmer. However, the full complexity of the archaeological remains subsequently revealed was not apparent at this stage. The excavations were to reveal the eastern part of a 'large market village', which had begun in the late pre-Roman Iron Age and continued into the early Saxon period. The excavated area focussed on a temple complex, centrally placed within a road and track network flanked by numerous domestic and industrial features (roundhouses, ditches, pits, pottery kilns, crop-drying ovens, *etc.*).

On the basis of previous excavation evidence from the Crescent Road area and the 1993 Elms Farm site, along with the geophysical survey results and the trial-trench findings, an excavation strategy had been formulated for the 1994 excavation. This aspired to undertake sampling of all archaeological features and deposits. However due to the high quantity of archaeological deposits identified in the 1994–5 season the excavation strategy needed to be revised at an early date and remained under revision throughout the excavation.

All areas were mechanically stripped of topsoil under archaeological supervision, except for a strip across the site where the presence of overhead electricity cables required clearance of 5m either side. Stripping was undertaken as a two-stage process whereby the turf and topsoil were removed by one machine, followed by a second which undertook the final removal of a bland uniform subsoil to a depth at which archaeological features and deposits could be clearly discerned. While this inevitably resulted in a degree of truncation, the manual removal of subsoil and cleaning of the exposed surface over large areas was simply impracticable.

Following the topsoil strip of Area A1, much of the area was found to be conveniently subdivided by a system of metalled roads. This was used as the basis for further subdivision into Areas G to K. The north-west part of Area A1 was less well defined and its subdivision into Areas D to F was initially influenced by the need to prioritise investigation of the land take of a contractor's haul-road along the northern edge of the site. Some minor adjustment to the extents of the latter areas has taken place during post-excavation work where landscape features such as major boundary ditches have been adopted in preference to the arbitrary divisions imposed in the field.

In the absence of recognisable landscape units to use as the basis of the subdivision of Area A2 and A4, a series of alternate 20m strips, aligned north to south, were investigated as Areas L to Q. The aim was to investigate 10% of all linear features and 50% of all cut features within the strips. In Area A2 excavation was hindered by severe and persistent flooding.

Due to Areas B and C being particularly prone to flooding, and the fact that the ground surface of these areas was scheduled to be built up with gravel, these areas were not extensively investigated. With minimal disturbance from construction works anticipated, only the first stage of stripping and pre-excavation recording was undertaken in these areas. Although Area A3 was subject to the topsoil stripping, no excavation was undertaken following its pre-excavation planning. Investigation of Area B was limited to two small open areas linked by a machine-excavated trench across the ancient watercourse that ran between them.
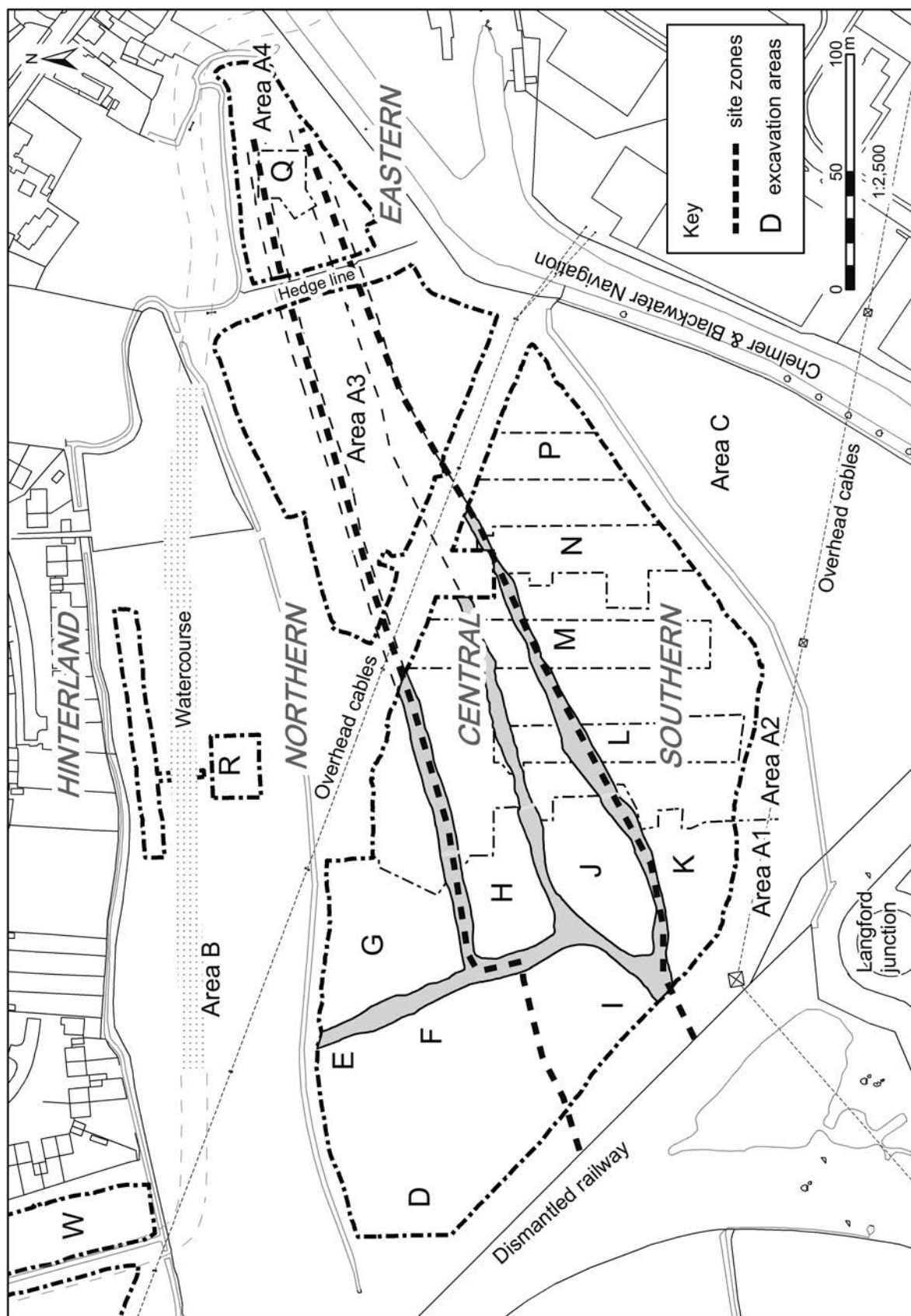
Figure 1.6 Site areas and zones for the 1994–5 site

Figure 1.7 Pre-excavation plan for the 1994–5 site showing all features and layers observed (both excavated and unexcavated)

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Although Area A3 was subject to two-stage topsoil stripping, no excavation was undertaken following its pre-excavation planning. The pre-excavation plans of all other stripped areas were drawn without further manual cleaning of the exposed surface and remain the only record of features that were not subsequently excavated.

The net result of this strategy was that approximately 18% of the entire development area was subjected to detailed excavation. In the 1994–5 excavations about 34% of the machine-stripped area was subject to detailed excavation. Due to site conditions the excavation of the full stratigraphic sequence was incomplete, as was the sampling of every single discrete feature. Thus it is estimated that the true percentage of completed sampling falls below 34%. This variable level of sampling from area to area must be borne in mind when interpreting the data set.

Metal detecting

Metal detecting of the topsoil was undertaken by ECC FAU staff and local enthusiasts under supervision across Area A. This was carried out during the stripping process between the initial removal of turf and topsoil and the fine strip onto the archaeology. No metal detecting occurred on the 1993 site.

The metal detecting of Area A1 proved to be productive. In light of this, a more systematic metal-detecting strategy evolved, with material from Areas A2 and A3 located to a 20m-grid square. Further material was sporadically metal detected from the huge spoil heaps that were the product of the topsoil stripping. This produced a corpus of metalwork that was accorded the context 3999. While the metal-detected finds form a large assemblage they are of varying provenance and the precision of their location ranges from general area (*e.g.* Area A1, A2, *etc.*) to 20m grid and, occasionally, eight-figure OS grid reference. Thus, few are suitable for inclusion in detailed considerations of artefact distributions but they have made a significant contribution to the general study of status, function and economy, particularly the coins.

Metal detecting was also undertaken within excavated areas, albeit on an *ad hoc* basis. Sweeps were made of some specific excavation areas, and layers and feature fills scanned during their excavation. These were recorded as part of the context assemblages. This, in part, was necessitated by repeated night-time raids by illicit metal detectorists. These raids resulted in the loss of a substantial, though unspecified, amount of metalwork from the site, as well as disturbance of stratified deposits. Judging from rough counts of holes left across the site, this loss amounted to many hundreds, if not thousands, of artefacts and the displacement of other less favoured objects that were simply discarded. Most likely the majority of looted items were copper alloy, such as coins and brooches. The removal of gold coins has also been alleged, but remains unsubstantiated. In response to repeated raiding, the site was 'salted' with alloy washers which was a successful strategy.

Post-excavation

The post-excavation for a site as large and complex as Elms Farm has proved challenging. In total there were some 17,000 contexts, 26,000 finds entries, and 1,350 soil samples. The finds entries comprised individual 'registered finds' and collective 'bulk finds', with one entry per category per context. For ease of reference individual features and their layers and fills were 'grouped' together in the post-excavation process and assigned Group numbers. It is these numbers that have been used on the site plans presented in this volume and in the text.

The decision was taken relatively late during the post-excavation process to rework the whole framework of the site narrative (see Vol. 2, Section 2). It was decided to move away from description and analysis of the site by Excavation Area (*i.e.* Areas A-R and W) and instead base the narrative on archaeologically tangible settlement units of enclosure systems and open areas.

However, most of the specialist publication reports (also in Volume 2) had been drafted by 2000 and they refer to Excavation Areas rather than the enclosure/open area framework. These have since been partially edited and adjusted to reflect subsequent changes in site narrative, but there has been no substantive updating of analyses in view of more recent discoveries and advances in understanding of individual finds types.

VI. Zonation
(Table 1.2)

As outlined above, the site has been subject to a number of divisions and subdivisions, imposed either by the developer or by the excavators. However, only the allocated areas D to R and W have any real significance in relation to the archaeological remains and specifically the land divisions of the Iron Age and Roman settlement. To aid the thematic approach adopted here, these areas have been grouped according to the general land use and zonation of activities within the Roman settlement morphology, and to a lesser extent, artefact and ecofact distributions. Hence, the fifteen areas of excavation have been subsumed into four general zones to facilitate discussion of the broad trends (Fig. 1.6). Individual areas are named when specific details are required. Area-by-area accounts of the site's archaeological content are presented in the site narrative section of Volume 2. The four settlement zones are as follows (Table 1.2):

Zone	Component areas
Northern	D, E, F, G and southern R
Central	H, I, J and part Q
Southern	K, L, M, N, P and part Q
Hinterland	Northern R and W

Table 1.2 Settlement zones and component areas

These characterising zones are used in conjunction with the phasing scheme, outlined below, to create a framework for the outline of the structural evidence and the various thematic studies which follow. The zones are based on the structure of the settlement from the Iron Age/Roman transition to the late Roman period (Period 2B to Period 5, Table 1.3), but the division of the text into zones has been retained for all other periods for convenience.

The **northern zone** comprises the land across the 'rear' of the gravel terrace over which the majority of the settlement is spread. Its northern extent is defined by the

watercourse that runs through general Area B and excavation Area R.

The **central zone** comprises a long strip of land that forms the 'core' of the settlement within the investigated area. It contains the 'public' functional areas of the temple precinct and its adjacent associated 'facilities' and open spaces.

The **southern zone** comprises land along the 'front' of the gravel terrace occupied by the main settlement. It is bounded to the north by the central zone where it meets the terrace edge.

The **hinterland zone** comprises the upper terrace to the north of the settlement and also includes the narrow strip of the lower terrace immediately north of the watercourse in Area B.

VII. Phasing
(Table 1.3)

Occupation of the site is divided into nine broad periods, from prehistoric to post-5th century AD (Table 1.3). The main focus of the analysis was the middle seven phases, that is, the late pre-Roman Iron Age (Period 2A) to the latest Roman and early Saxon (Period 6). These broad periods enabled the large quantity of complex and spatially disparate remains to be analysed successfully as a whole. While pottery analysis employed a more specific ceramic pottery dating scheme (see Vol. 2, Section 3.2) within this basic framework, to facilitate a greater detail of analysis of supply and consumption, all stratigraphic analysis and other specialist study has been carried out using the site period scheme.

The phasing and dating of the site rests on two distinct strands: stratigraphy and ceramic dating. The vast majority of features could be dated ceramically far more closely than they could be phased stratigraphically; although there were significant groups of features, especially dense masses of intercut pits, where there was considerable stratigraphic depth within a single ceramic period.

Initially, each site area (D to R and W) was individually phased, based purely on internal structural criteria and informed by provisional pottery dating. A site-wide phasing scheme was subsequently imposed upon this, with the detail of individual area phasing retained only as sub-phases within the main periods. The use of sub-phasing is specific to each area and does not necessarily correlate between areas.

There are also a number of general restrictions or problems with the site chronology that require consideration here. Across the site there is an issue of residuality, which is not surprising given that the area was intensively settled for some 500 years. Equally the earlier features tended to be masked by the later settlement activity and are more fragmentary in nature. Many of the boundaries show considerable longevity, particularly those associated with the enclosures in the southern zone. Here the boundaries may have had their origin in the Late Iron Age; the ditches eventually fill up but the former lines of the boundaries are still respected or perpetuated (perhaps as fences or hedges) as late as the 4th century. The structural features tend to be somewhat light on dating evidence and their postulated plans are therefore partially based on a 'best fit' approach.

VIII. Report format

Volume 1
Volume 1 is, intentionally, a synthetic presentation of what the authors feel to be the most important aspects of the Late Iron Age to early Saxon settlement. The vast dataset, derived from an extensive site, contains clear temporal and spatial patterning. This makes discussion of the composition of this settlement, and of change and continuity within it, a fruitful area of study and one which requires detailed consideration and interpretation beyond the usual presentation of the evidence followed by a summary discussion. Thus, this volume identifies the key aspects of the settlement and presents them in a series of thematic chapters that draw their supporting evidence from the many descriptive and analytical reports that comprise Volume 2.

This approach reflects the underpinning ethos that has guided the project throughout the analytical and reporting process. Specific research aims, outlined prior to the commencement of analysis, have directed analytical study by defining a series of question-led topics. These project aims have taken into account the needs of current regional and national research aims as highlighted in a number of agendas, which have emerged during the life of the project (*e.g.* Glazebrook 1997; Haselgrove *et al*. 2000; James and Millett 2001). All strands of the analysis, whether stratigraphic, artefactual or ecofactual based, have thus been carried out on a question-specific basis, the key results of which have then been integrated to form the substance of the thematic sections of this volume.

Phase	Broad period	Broad date range	Ceramic phase	Ceramic date range
1	Prehistoric	Palaeolithic to Middle Iron Age	-	-
2A	Late pre-Roman Iron Age	Mid 1st century BC to early 1st century AD	1 2	*c.* 50-15BC *c.* 15BC-AD20
2B	Iron Age/Roman transition	Early to mid 1st century AD	3	*c.* AD20-55
3A	Early Roman	Later 1st century AD	4	*c.* AD55-80
3B	Early Roman	Early to mid 2nd century AD	5 6	*c.* AD80-125 *c.* AD125-170
4	Mid Roman	Later 2nd to mid 3rd century AD	7 8	*c.* AD170-210 *c.* Ad210-260
5	Late Roman	Later 3rd to mid 4th century AD	9 10	*c.* AD260-310 *c.* AD310-360
6	Latest Roman – early Saxon	Late 4th to 5th century AD	11	*c.* AD360-400+
7	Later (post-abandonment)	Post-5th century AD to present	-	-

Table 1.3 Site-wide phasing scheme

Within these thematic sections, the presentation of alternative interpretations has been avoided as far as possible. Those offered represent what the authors believe to be the most likely scenarios. This is not to say that other possibilities were not considered or that they have been summarily dismissed, merely that full discussion of all alternatives, in all cases, would have considerably lengthened the text.

While the authors remain responsible for errors of commission or omission relating to the research that was undertaken, the financial realities of modern archaeological research must shoulder responsibility for the absence of much more that could have been attempted, and for much that was but simply cannot be presented.

Volume 2

Volume 2 is published as a monograph report in *Internet Archaeology* at http://intarch.ac.uk/ and can be accessed free of charge. However, despite this being a digital volume it must be borne in mind that the project (fieldwork undertaken 1993–5) dates to the beginning of the digital age and the full use of digital recording methodologies on archaeological sites post-dates the fieldwork stages of this project. It follows a more conventional monograph publication format and contains more description, analysis and basic interpretation than Volume 1. As with the content of the synthetic sections of Volume 1, the evidence presented in Volume 2 is also, of necessity, highly selective. Description of excavated features and deposits and of artefact and environmental assemblages are not comprehensive, but focus upon the key aspects that contribute to the interpretation and understanding of the settlement.

With regard to the content of the site narrative (Vol. 2, Section 2), consideration has been given to what are perceived as the key elements of the site or of its various material assemblages. Omissions are largely of unphased or otherwise uninterpreted features along with virtually all unexcavated remains. Other, often reasonably well dated and phased, features such as relatively unremarkable pits have not been described other than in the most collective and summary terms, though further information may be found in the digital archive at http://archaeology dataservice.ac.uk/ and paper archives at Colchester Museum. However, all features do appear on the relevant area and phase plans. Feature fills, unless specifically relevant, are not generally described (nearly all were some variant of grey-brown sandy silt, with a low gravel or small pebble component), though an indication of their nature can be gained from the selected section drawings.

The excavations produced a very large and varied artefactual assemblage ranging in date from the Palaeolithic to post-medieval periods, though predominantly concentrated on the Late Iron Age to Roman. The large pottery, glass vessel and coin assemblages are reported upon individually in Volume 2. An attempt has been made to go beyond simply catalogue and assemblage descriptions with these assemblages. Thus the pottery analysis additionally pursues a number of function and use studies, exploring topics such as pottery production, the patterns of wear caused by usage of Samian vessels, the use and reuse of amphora, the role of holes or perforations in pottery and the structured deposition of pottery groups. The remaining finds assemblages are subsumed into a single report that is primarily ordered in terms of function (as Crummy 1983), rather than material and type. The intention of this approach is to facilitate an improved appreciation of the significance of their group value and to enhance their contribution to the interpretation of the site of what is otherwise a very considerable and diverse collection of artefacts. It is appreciated that some types of finds have ambiguous or multi-faceted functions and this is acknowledged with the separate reporting of such items as grave goods.

The archive

The project archive comprises two elements. Firstly there is the conventional archive comprising original primary records and finds, which are deposited with the Colchester and Ipswich Museum at Colchester. Secondly there is the digital archive, which is deposited with the Archaeology Data Service at http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/ in York. Again, it must be borne in mind that the project dates to the beginning of the digital age and the full use of digital recording methodologies on archaeological sites largely post-dates the fieldwork stages of this project. The digital archive contains the original digital data for the site in the form of a series of relational database tables (including context descriptions, basic finds identification and quantification, *etc.*), shapefiles of the digitised site plans and those elements of the specialist analytical reports that are not presented in Volume 2 (mostly appendices and supporting data sets). During the post-excavation processes, further databases were created specifically for the Roman building materials, and the Late Iron Age/ Roman pottery, whose analysis required information in fields not provided in the main Finds database, which are also made accessible here.

Chapter 2. Dating, Phasing and Spatial Ordering

I. Period 1: Prehistoric
(Fig. 2.1)

The excavations at Elms Farm have produced evidence for the occupation of the landscape from the Neolithic period onwards. These prehistoric aspects of the site, predating the Late Iron Age (nominally to 50 BC), are unconnected to the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement and have been published separately (Atkinson and Preston 2001). Therefore, only a brief summary of their form and significance is presented here.

The legible evidence for prehistoric occupation is concentrated on the upper gravel terrace, within Excavation Area W, which lies to the north of the Late Iron Age and later settlement focus, and had escaped much of the masking and truncating activity caused by later settlement activity. This early occupation of the landscape comprises Neolithic settlement remains, Bronze Age funerary monuments (a Beaker burial, barrow and cremation burials) and vestiges of field systems of tentative Early to Middle Iron Age date (Fig. 2.1).

It is evident that prehistoric occupation and land use was widespread and extended south across the area that subsequently became the focus of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, as far as the Chelmer river and its marshlands. Discovery of prehistoric features amongst the dense and complex later remains was largely incidental, but hints at a similar range of dates and types as those of the upper gravel terrace. Of particular note is a second Beaker burial accompanied by two late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pits in the southern half of the site. Significantly, a group of five substantial post-holes of Middle Bronze Age date lay under the Late Iron Age and Roman temple complex present in Excavation Area J. It has been conjectured that these constitute the remains of an earlier structure that occupied a slight rise on the gravel terrace, which may itself be of religious significance (Atkinson and Preston 2001, 70). Residual flintwork of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Bronze Age date, and pottery of Bronze Age and earlier Iron Age date, was present across the later settlement area and attests to widespread, if seemingly unfocused, utilisation of the lower terrace.

The prehistoric activity at Elms Farm forms one small piece of a much larger prehistoric landscape stretching along the lower Blackwater gravel terraces, as evidenced by extensive cropmark complexes and large-scale excavations (Wallis and Waughman 1998).

II. Period 2: Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Roman transition (mid 1st century BC to early/mid 1st century AD)
(Figs 2.2 and 2.3)

The amalgamation of the Late Iron Age and Late Iron Age/early Roman transition periods (Period 2) is not ideal, but does reflect the great difficulty in distinguishing between the two in both the structural and artefactual records. The chronology of this transition from Briton to Roman is itself only hazily defined. In its purest sense, the conquest of Britain is but a single, though admittedly important, event in an episode of cultural change that, at least in Essex, may be considered to span 50 BC to AD 70. In the case of Heybridge, it can be demonstrated that the process of Romanisation began as early as the mid 1st century BC and that the greatest impact on the physical settlement had already been felt prior to AD 43 in the form of major remodelling of the settlement core. In the areas that this occurs, a subdivision of Period 2 (*i.e.* Periods 2A and 2B) has been attempted on either side of this episode (Figs 2.2 and 2.3). Apart from the enclosure and field system changes of the northern part of the settlement (Areas D to G) and the hinterland (Area W), this is the only major event that transcends both settlement plots and arbitrary excavation areas. However, this cannot be traced across the whole of the settlement and thus it is simply not possible to relate features beyond its extent to either before or after the remodelling event itself.

The remodelling episode (Period 2B) imposed an infrastructure of metalled roads and occupation surfaces on the settlement; this phase is tentatively dated to the decade or two preceding the conquest (*i.e.* AD 20s–30s). Features of exclusively Late Iron Age character have been found both above and below elements of this infrastructure, the excavated evidence for which is presented in detail in the site narrative. However, it is conceded that the later features could contain assemblages that post-date the conquest, but did not acquire distinctively Romanised material. If this is the case, it is unlikely that that they could date later than AD 50 and so the remodelling episode should still be regarded as a transitional phenomenon. Ceramically the phase is characterised by the gradual appearance of samian and various Roman fabrics, accompanied by a decline in other imported fine wares and amphorae, although grog-tempered pottery continues to form a major component, averaging 85%, of all assemblages.

III. Period 3: Early Roman (later 1st to mid 2nd century AD)
(Fig. 2.4)

Early Roman (Period 3) is deemed to be archaeologically detectable from *c.* AD 50 based on pottery styles, but indigenous material comprises the majority of assemblages until *c.* AD 70 at Elms Farm. It was predominantly a period of broad continuity and development following the creation of the Late Iron Age/early Roman settlement infrastructure in the preceding period (Fig. 2.4). With the essential infrastructure already laid down, there was little substantive change made to the roads or to the major enclosure systems within the various settlement zones identified. Functionally, there is also little change evident within the individual enclosures, except that of the temple precinct and the adjacent Open Areas (18 and 19). The precinct exhibits changing depositional practice and underwent a second phase of remodelling in the early 2nd century. The open areas are conjectured to adopt a support or service role in relation to the temple precinct.
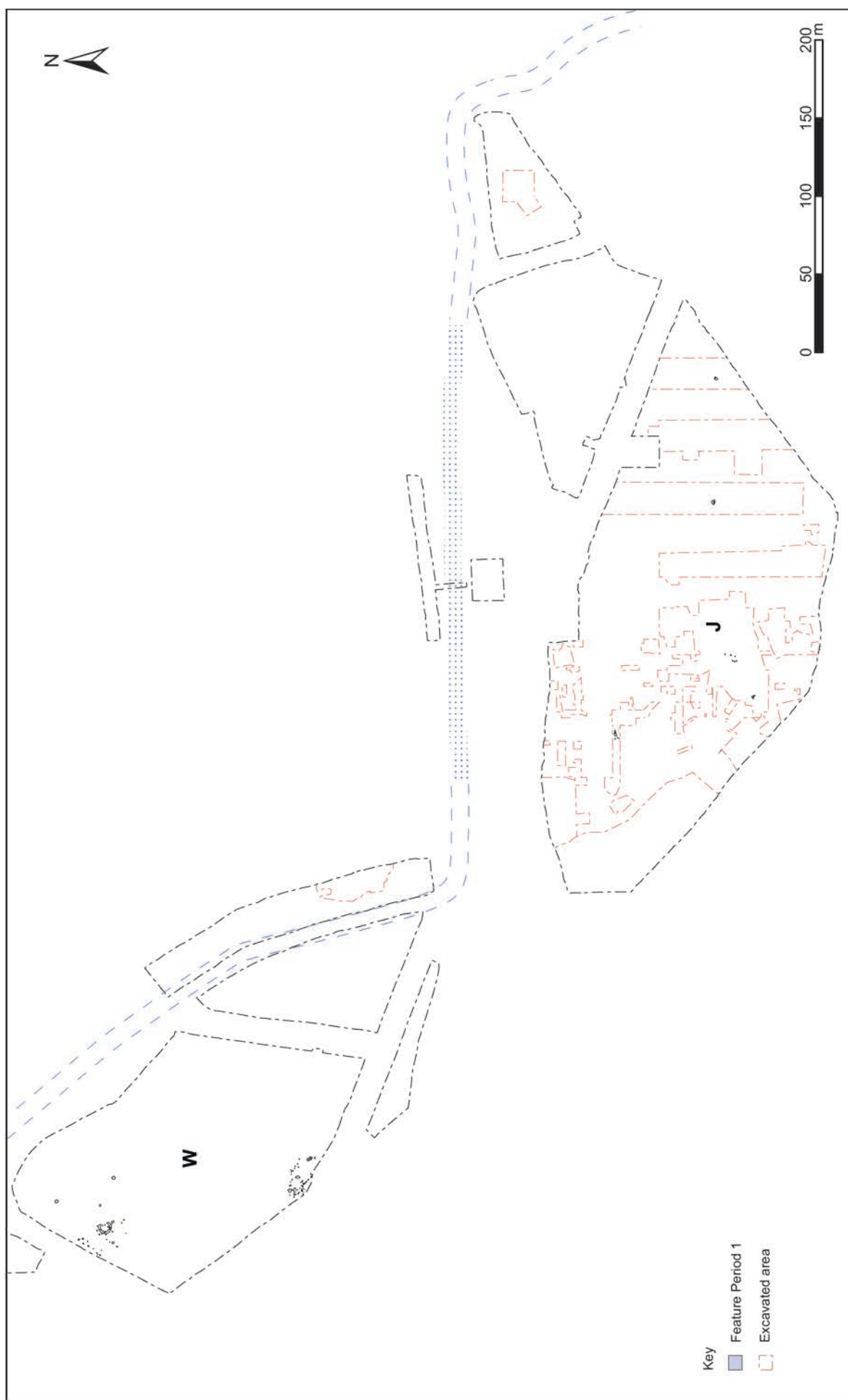
Figure 2.1 Period 1 – Prehistoric features

Key

Feature Period 1

Excavated area
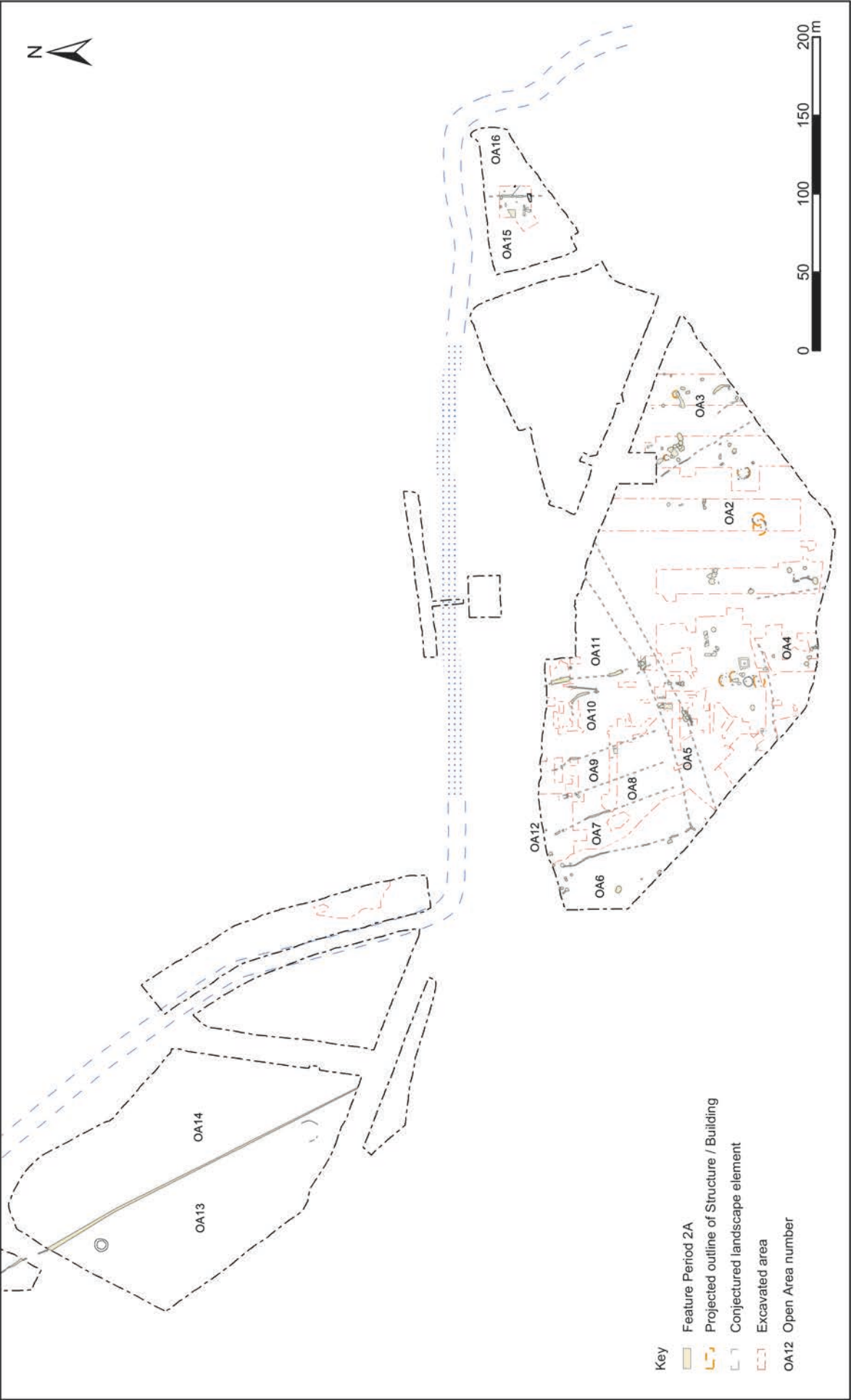
Figure 2.2 Period 2A – Late pre-Roman Iron Age features

Key

Feature Period 2A

Projected outline of Structure / Building

Conjectured landscape element

Excavated area

OA12   Open Area number

Figure 2.3 Period 2B – Late Iron Age and early Roman features
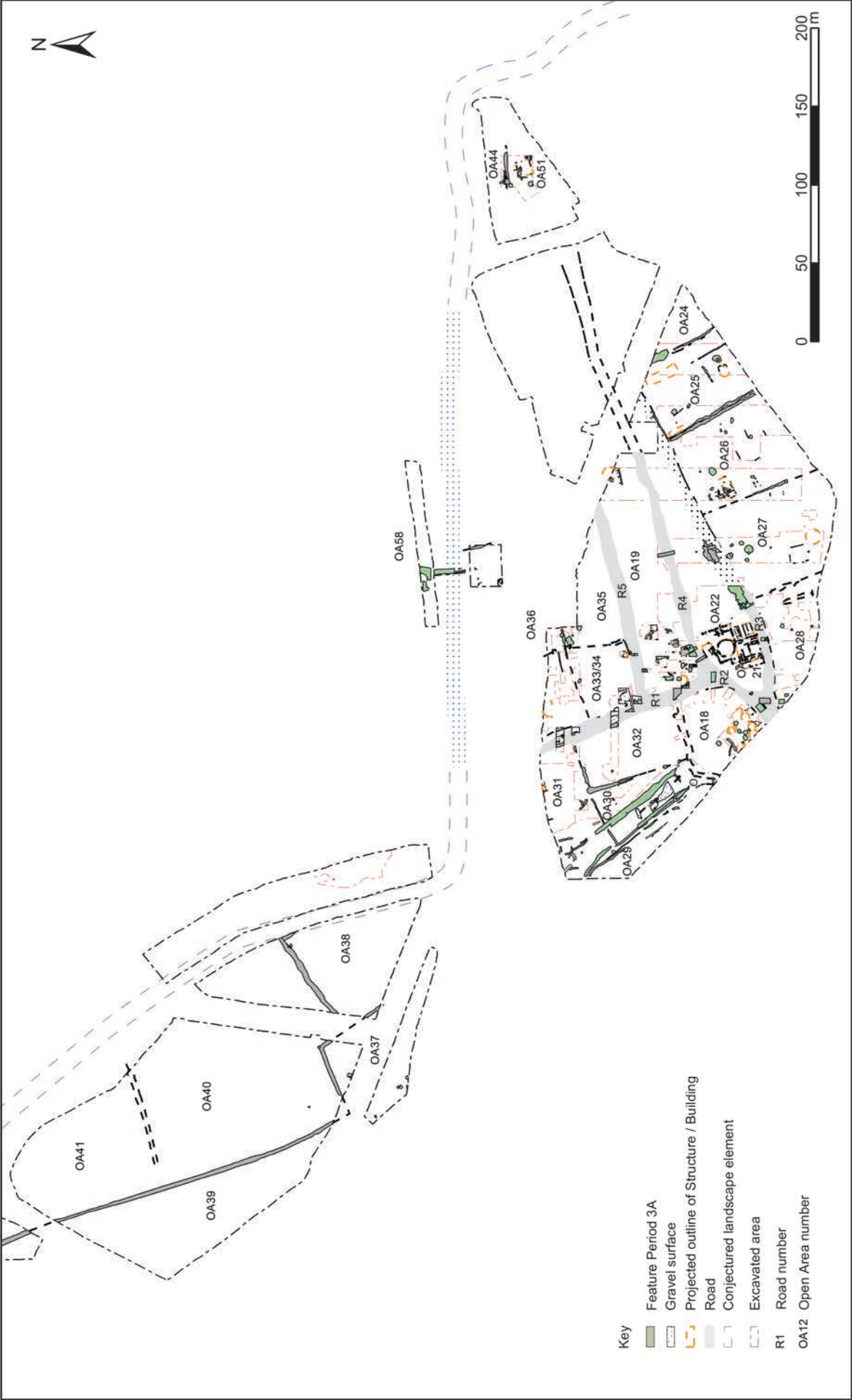
Figure 2.4 Period 3A – Early Roman features

Figure 2.5 Period 3B – Early Roman features

Key

	Feature Period 3B
	Gravel surface
	Projected outline of Structure / Building
	Road
	Conjectured landscape element
	Excavated area
R1	Road number
OA12	Open Area number
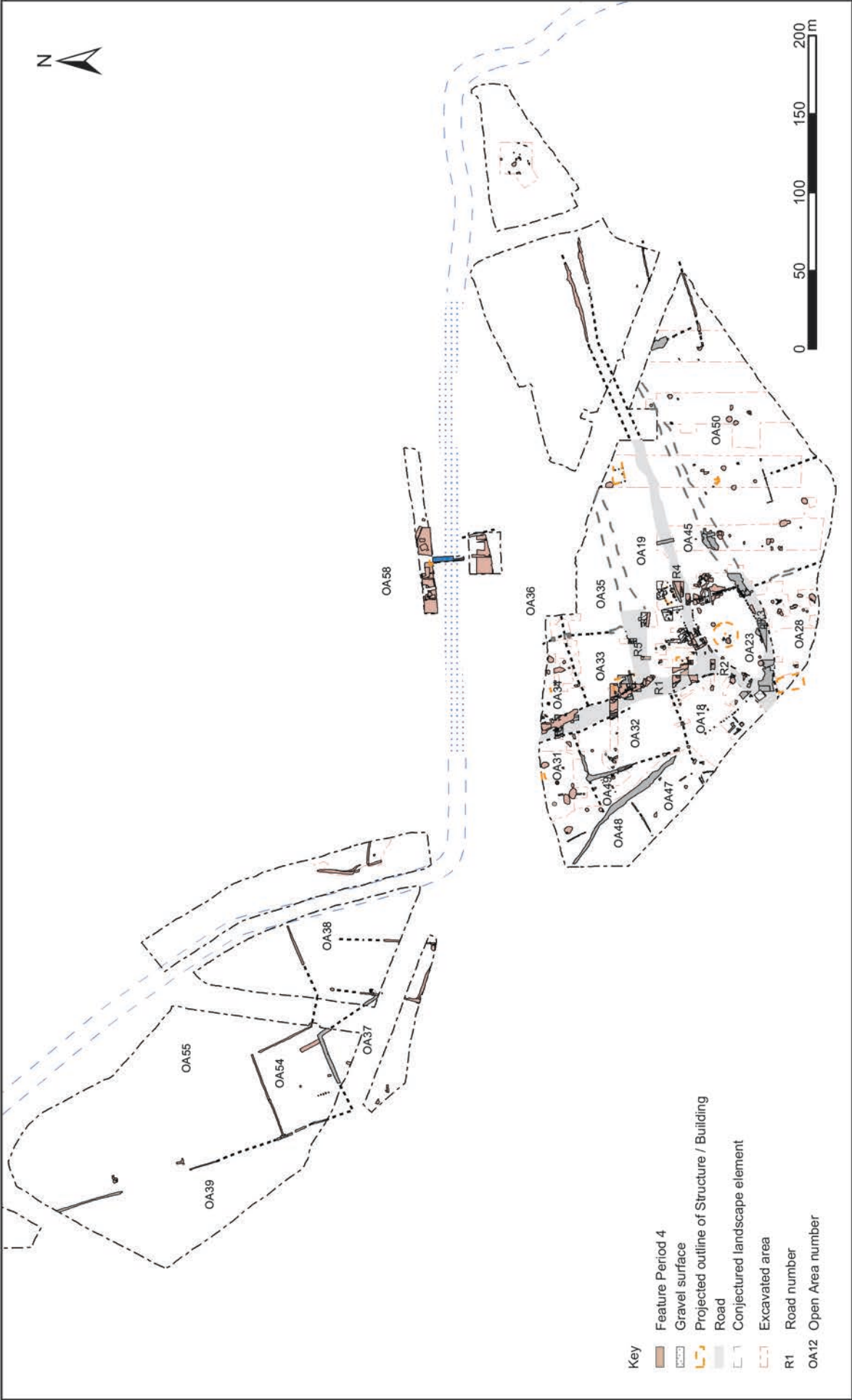
Figure 2.6 Period 4 – Mid Roman features
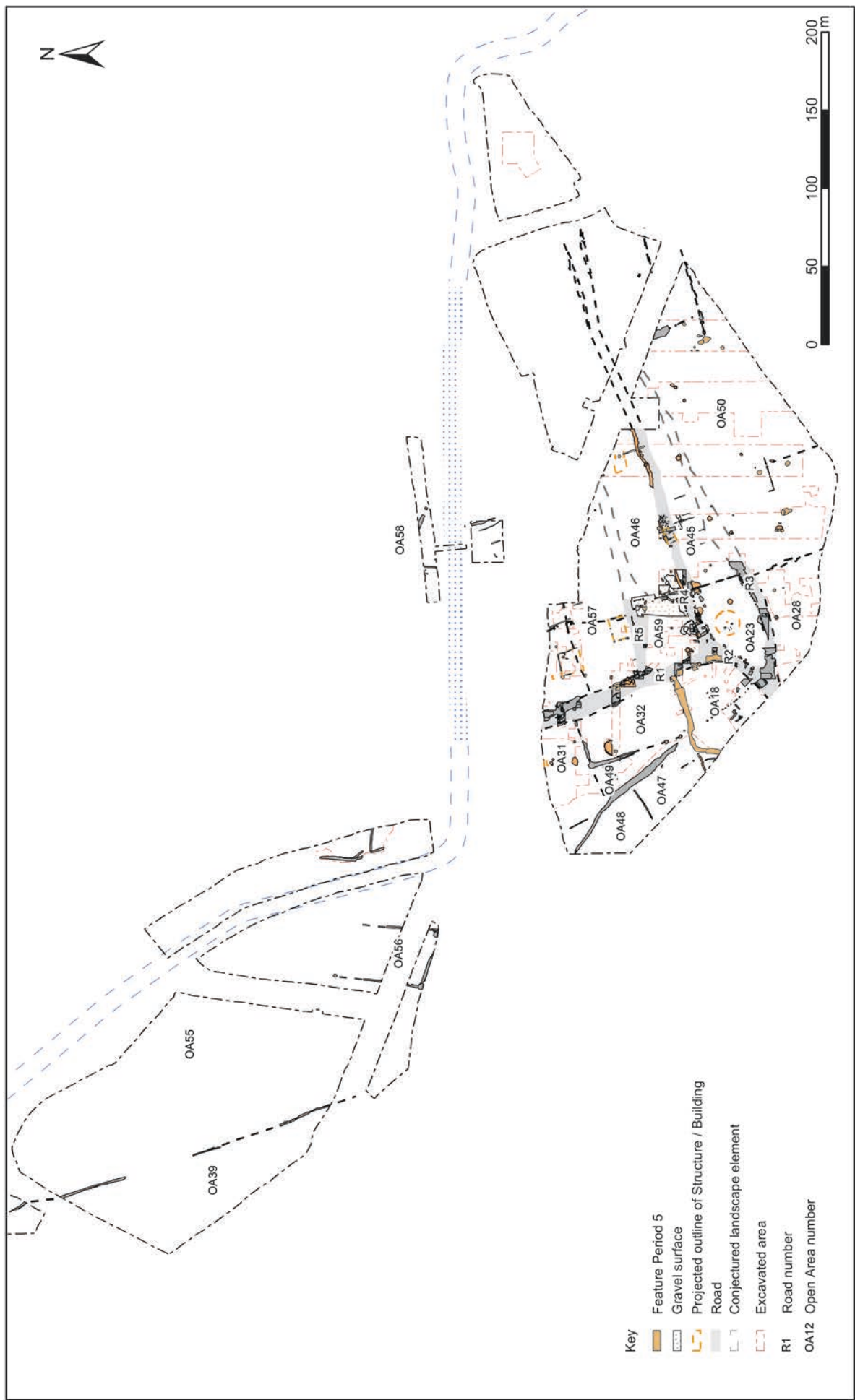
Figure 2.7 Period 5 – Late Roman features

Key

	Feature Period 5
	Gravel surface
	Projected outline of Structure / Building
	Road
	Conjectured landscape element
	Excavated area
R1	Road number
OA12	Open Area number
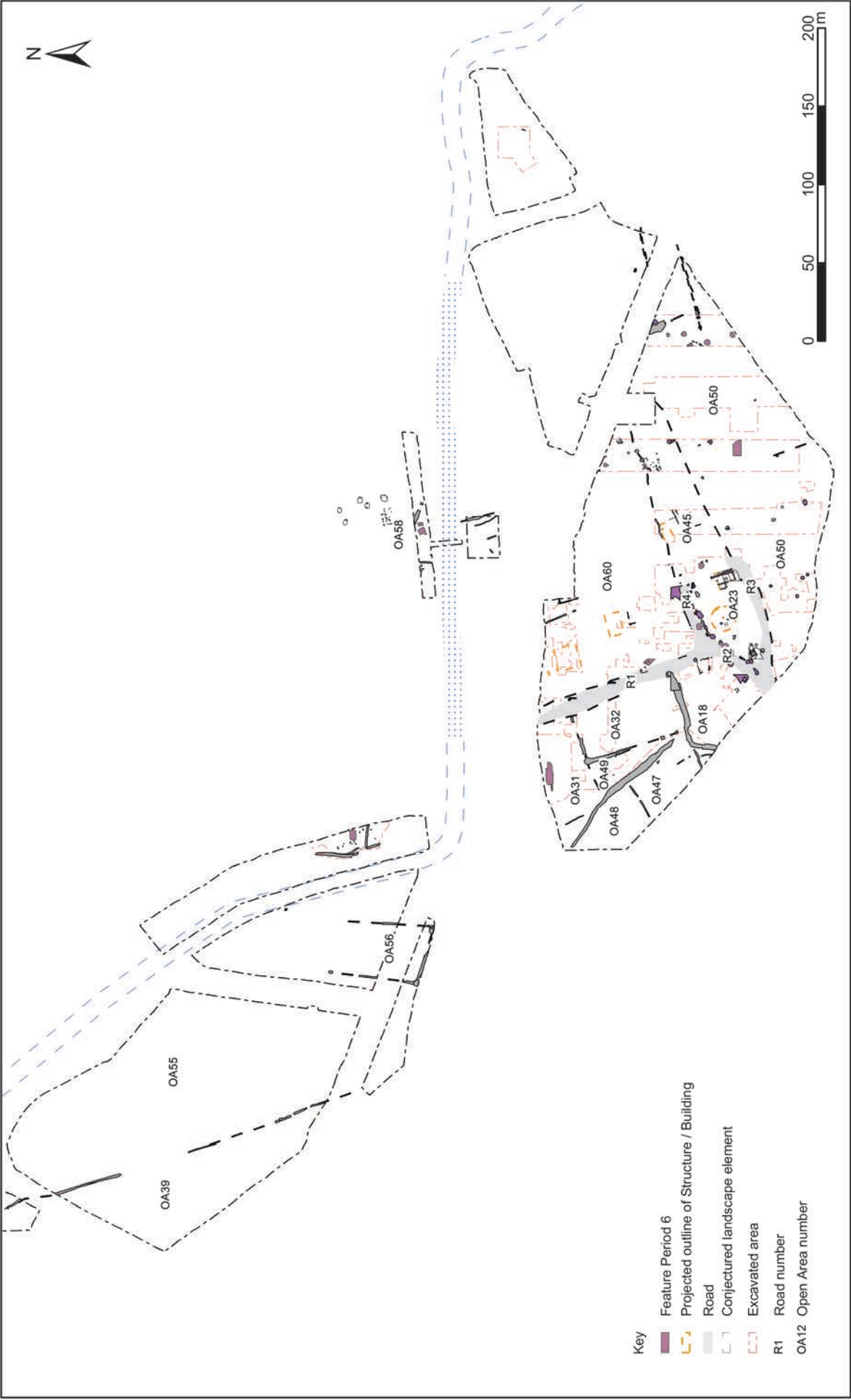
Figure 2.8 Period 6 – Latest Roman/early Saxon features

Key

	Feature Period 6
	Projected outline of Structure / Building
	Road
	Conjectured landscape element
	Excavated area
R1	Road number
OA12	Open Area number
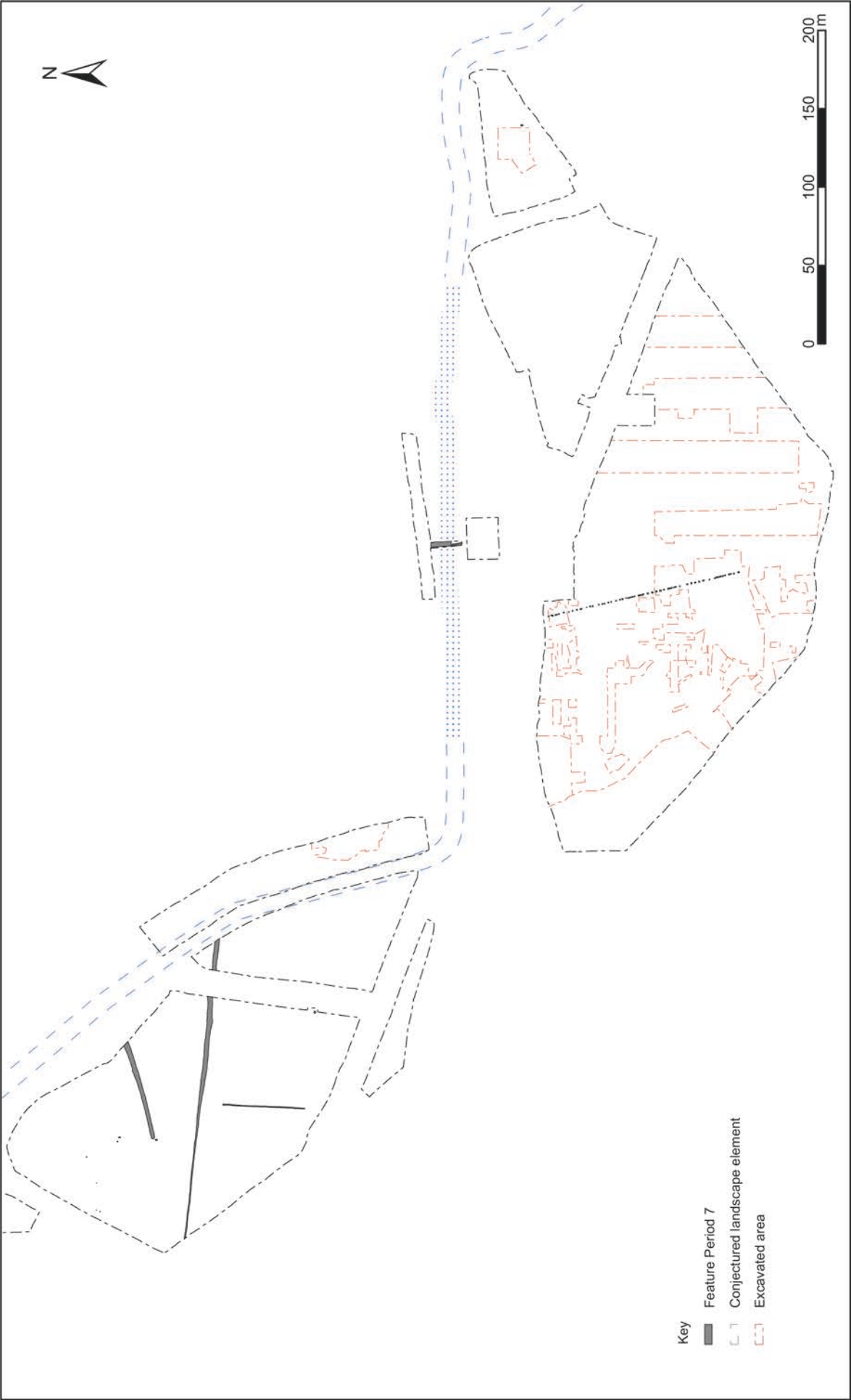
Figure 2.9 Period 7 – Medieval and post-medieval features

Key
Feature Period 7
Conjectured landscape element
Excavated area

IV. Periods 4 and 5: Mid and late Roman (later 2nd to mid 4th century AD)
(Figs 2.5 and 2.6)

Although the later 2nd to mid 4th century constitutes a period of continuity and homogeneity in terms of settlement development and dynamics, its division into two periods is one of practicality, enabling consideration and comparison of roughly proportionate spans of time. The prevailing impression derived from Period 4 remains is of occupation activity contracting towards the settlement nucleus, which lies to the west of the temple complex. At the same time much of the area encompassed by the Elms Farm excavations was increasingly being given over to peripheral, perhaps purely agricultural, uses (Fig. 2.5). Within this broad picture, however, some distinctions can be made. It is, for example, apparent that continuity is more manifest in those areas closest to the settlement focus. Thus, Open Area 23 (the temple precinct) and Open Areas 18, 19 and 28 seem to demonstrate least change from Period 3. Indeed, the continuing development of the temple complex is conspicuous against the general background of apparent contraction and change of use.

The late Roman settlement continued to contract, and perhaps decline in Period 5 (Fig. 2.6). The main thoroughfare of Roads 1 and 2 remained in use and received a degree of maintenance early in Period 5 before showing signs of neglect and degeneration. Side Roads 3, 4 and 5 all passed out of use in Period 5 and signal the gradual fragmentation of the settlement infrastructure, with increased encroachment by pits and buildings onto the roads. Despite this, the temple precinct persisted as a relative constant amid surrounding change. However, its front screening wall was removed by the mid 4th century, thus opening the enclosure and perhaps marking a change in the way the religious focus was regarded and used. Deposition of artefacts with likely ritual significance continued, and, no longer constrained by the precinct wall, such activity seems to spill out into the open area in front. On the evidence of other investigations along Crescent Road (see Chapter 1), it seems likely that there was further late Roman occupation on the slightly higher ground to the north, beyond the Elms Farm development area.

V. Period 6: Latest Roman and early Saxon (late 4th to 5th century AD)
(Fig. 2.7)

The transition from the latest Roman to early Saxon period is also poorly defined, and with the recognition that the dating and interpretation of features to either period is difficult, a broad transitional phase was adopted for the site. The determination of what constitutes a 'final Roman' assemblage is itself problematical (see Vol. 2, Sections 3.2.1.3 and 3.3), there being little quantified comparative data available and the issues of reuse residuality conspiring to blur the picture further. The apparent reuse of some late Roman settlement features, the disregard for others, and the co-existence of latest Roman and Saxon pottery assemblages all make meaningful separation into Roman and Saxon fraught with difficulty.

The continued decline and contraction of the Roman settlement toward its core to the west of the area of investigation is evident (Fig. 2.7). The main thoroughfares may have survived in an un-maintained state until the end of the Roman period, but all around the infrastructure appears to have fragmented. However, the religious focus functioned into the late 4th century, when the precinct wall and adjacent monumental post were removed and a substantial building placed over the former boundary. It is tentatively suggested that the new structure could perhaps have been an early Christian chapel.

What remained of the former Roman settlement into the 5th century, and whether there was continuity of occupation into the early Saxon period, is unclear. Distinct early Saxon material, almost wholly restricted to very small quantities of pottery in the tops of former Roman settlement remains, is scattered across the lower terrace. Two buildings are identified, although these were perhaps peripheral to an occupation focus located on higher ground to the north. Three further sunken-featured buildings are located to the north and east of the defunct watercourse and are part of the wider early Saxon settlement identified from other investigations along Crescent Road. This final episode of occupation at Elms Farm does not appear to endure beyond the 5th century.

VI. Period 7: Post-abandonment to the present
(Figs 2.8 and 2.9)

Period 7 is a catch-all for activity that post-dates the final abandonment of the settlement, probably in the early 6th century (Fig. 2.8). This apparent absence is substantiated by a similar absence displayed by the other investigated sites in the Crescent Road/Langford Road vicinity. However, while settlement on the gravel terraces evidently ceased, it is highly likely that this part of the landscape continued to be used, if only for grazing. Settlement activity shifted to the opposite side of the river Chelmer and onto the high ground where a burh was later founded in AD 916 by Edward the Elder. The area is now occupied by the town of Maldon. The earliest known Saxon occupation, at a site located close to the waterfront at The Hythe, is dated to the mid 7th to mid 9th centuries AD (Ennis 2009).

Evidence of medieval activity is restricted to a quantity of metalwork items, presumed to represent incidental loss or discard by individuals either crossing or actively exploiting this grassland landscape. However, continued agricultural management of both upper and lower terraces is more tangible in the post-medieval period, though largely restricted to simple boundary structures, land drainage and dump or levelling deposits (Fig. 2.9).

Chapter 3. Settlement Morphology

I. Introduction

This section of the report gives a broad view of the shape of activity on the site through time. It is in essence a synthesis of the site narrative report, to which reference should be made for more detail (Vol. 2, Section 2). Given the large area and numerous features encompassed, the description and discussion of morphological development is presented chronologically, and employs the settlement zoning scheme as outlined in Chapter 2 to give spatial coherence. However, the earliest periods of occupation (Periods 1 and 2A) cannot be subdivided meaningfully by the same zoning of settlement activity, so their discussion is divided into wider topographical sub-headings. The site was subdivided into rectilinear enclosures, and the areas thus enclosed are referred to as Open Areas. The following text, and more particularly the detailed discussions in Volume 2, describe the site by zone and by Open Area. Features have been given Group numbers which encompass both cut, recuts, segments and fills, and it is by this number that they are referenced on the plans and in Volume 2.

Overall, the emergent picture of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement combines broad continuity within a complex of detailed changes, the most marked changes occurring first around the mid 1st and then during later 2nd centuries AD. The fundamental character of the settlement remained remarkably constant between the Late Iron Age and the later Roman period, although this is not readily apparent at times. In many ways, the essence of settlement layout was set early on and continued to dictate land division and use throughout. With such a 'fossilized' morphology, it is relatively easy to chart the details of development, contraction, decline and eventual abandonment for much of the Late Iron Age to early Saxon settlement at Heybridge. It should be noted that the post-abandonment land-use is discussed in Chapter 8 while that of the earlier prehistoric periods has been published separately (Atkinson and Preston 2001).

II. The Late Iron Age settlement origins (Period 2A)

The view of the earliest settlement morphology is rather fragmentary. The discovery of elements of its layout was governed largely by chance, dependent upon the severity of truncation by later settlement features and on the extent and depth of excavation undertaken in any given area. In addition, it is likely that a proportion of the unphased features, lacking both diagnostic stratigraphy and dating evidence, belonged to this phase of the settlement's history. Discussion of the earliest phase of settlement in relation to the functional zones recognised in later periods would be anachronistic, since this patterning followed the later imposition of the road infrastructure (in 'transitional' Period 2B). The only meaningful division of the site prior to the early 1st century AD appears to be that between the lower gravel terrace and the hinterland as investigated in Area W, on the terrace above.

The lower terrace
(Fig. 3.1)

Enclosures
Although extremely fragmentary, evidence for the earliest settlement was reasonably consistent across the site, largely comprising curving or sinuous ditches that divided the lower gravel terrace into fairly large, rectilinear, units of land (referred to as Open Areas). The majority of evidence for land division was located in the north-west of the 1994 site where extensive shallow and sinuous ditches, Group 3 and Group 4, ran on a parallel nearly north–south alignment *c.* 24m apart. Less extensive ditch fragments, Group 7 and Group 8, the latter truncated by the earliest phase of Road 1, lay to the east of the ditches and were spaced at similar intervals. The most easterly of these boundary features, ditch Group 5, was also the most substantial and underlay later Road 5 at its southern end. It is likely that this boundary feature was associated with further fragments of a similarly aligned ditch which emerged from beneath the south side of the same road in the south-east corner of Open Area 10 (Group 2). These may have flanked an early north–south trackway, suggested by a slight hollow observed alongside. Open Area 10 was bounded by the most southerly ditches of this system. Running roughly east–west, ditch Group 21 ran beneath Road 1, emerging in Area I. It is noteworthy that their position and alignment coincided with the change in surface geology between brickearth to the north and gravel to the south. This positioning of the southern limit of this ditch complex was surely deliberate, and suggests that the ditch system occupying the area of brickearth geology developed in response to its poorly draining nature.

These ditches collectively defined a series of strip fields or enclosures that extended from this point on the geological boundary northward, presumably to the edge of the river channel in Area R some 150m away. It is tempting to postulate that this system was also extensive in the east–west plane, perhaps even extending at least as far as shallow interrupted ditch 25098 (Group 11) at the eastern end of the excavations. Although a substantial tract of unexcavated site lay between ditches 25045 (Group 5) and 25098 (Group 11), it is possible that further land divisions may be tentatively discerned in the northern part of Area A2 and perhaps in Area A3, and that this system was wholly restricted to the brickearth (Figs 1.7 and 2.2). Within this system there appear to have been other, less regular sub-enclosures principally denoted by curving ditch 25044 (Group 79) and angular ditch 25252 (Groups 63–65). Both were substantial features, generally greater than those of the surrounding regular land boundaries. However, their functions remain unknown.

A common feature of the brickearth surface geology across the whole of the northern half of the lower terrace
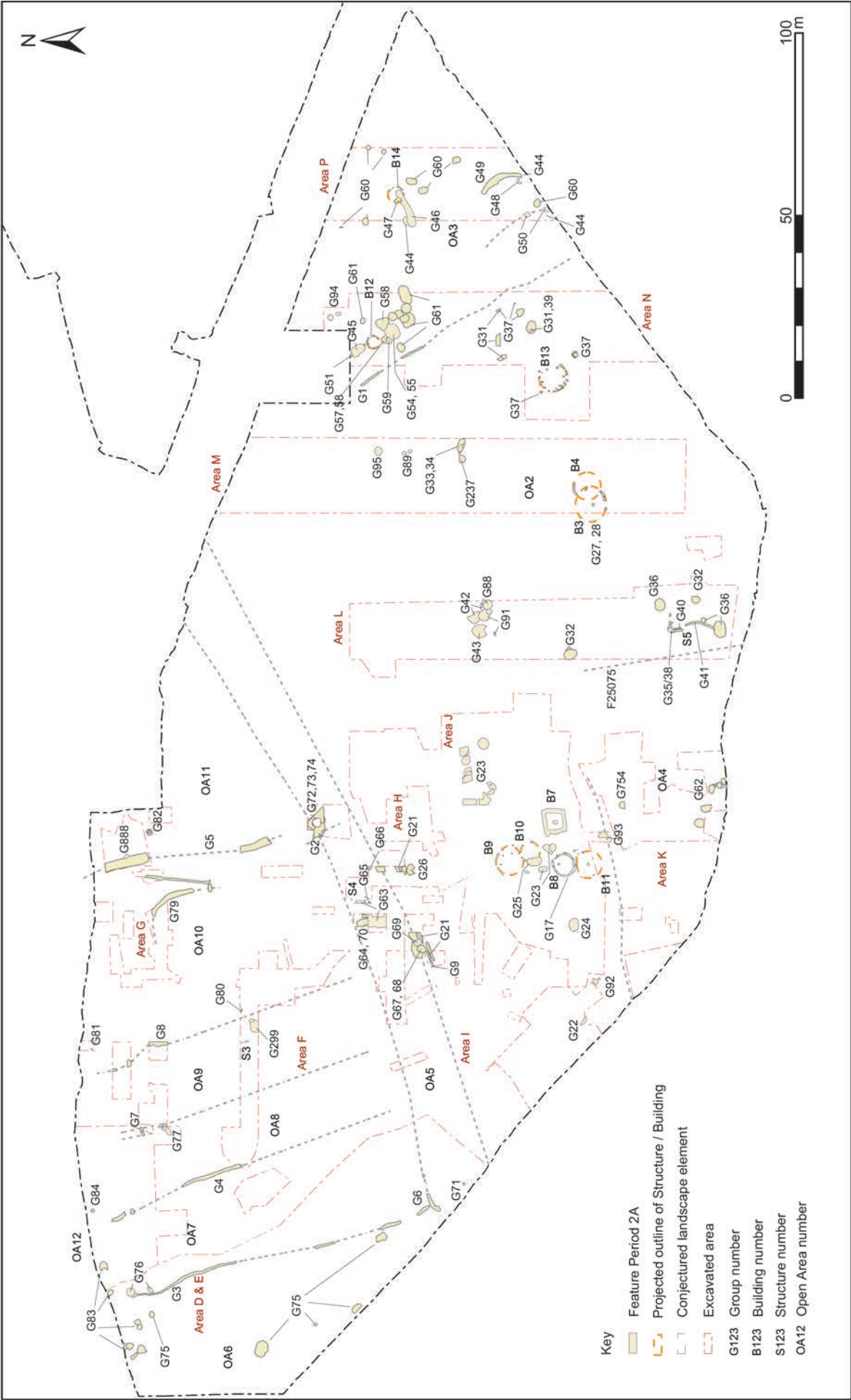
Figure 3.1 Late pre-Roman Iron Age features on the lower terrace (Period 2A)

was the reworking of its surface to form a distinct and separate layer. In general, the upper 0.1–0.15m of this geological deposit was an orange sandy gravel brickearth, much more mixed than the undisturbed lower portion. Soil micromorphology analysis has suggested that it represented a trampled or cultivated dung-rich soil (Vol. 2, Section 4.9). It is possible that this reworked deposit represented the base of a plough soil, though plough scores were not identified in its surface. More likely, the reworking was a product of animal disturbance, perhaps created by grazing cattle sinking into poorly draining ground. This reworking was remarkably consistent in date across the whole area, stratigraphic evidence yielding a date in the early 1st century AD. The stratigraphy was often not straightforward, so there is room to doubt whether features apparently 'sealed' by the upper, reworked portion of the brickearth really can be allowed to provide a *terminus post quem* for it. However, given the uniformity of dating from widely dispersed features both above and below these soils, the recorded stratigraphy can probably be taken at face value.

The southern portion of the lower terrace also appears to have been formalised by its division into a series of regular rectilinear enclosures. These probably ran from both the northern and southern terrace edges in towards the middle. Although obscured by activity in what later became the 'central zone' of the mid 1st century and later settlement, it is speculated that the two rows more or less met at the brickearth/gravel interface in the surface geology, perhaps fronting onto an east–west route-way that separated them. While there is little direct evidence for such a thoroughfare, it is entirely possible that Road/Track 4 later formalised its route. Although superficially similar, the enclosures either side of this terrace division appear to have had somewhat differing functions. Those along the south side of the terrace had a

predominantly domestic character evidenced by fragmentary remains of roundhouse gullies (see below), whilst the spread of re-worked earth to the north would suggest occupation by animals.

The temple area
(Pl. 3.1)
It appears to be in the Late Iron Age that a sacred place was established, or at least took on tangible form, in the centre and highest point of the lower terrace (Open Area 1, Figs 3.1 and 6.1; for detail see Vol. 2 Detailed Text 2A_06). In the central zone, Buildings 7 and 8 (Pl. 3.1) were amongst the most convincing of the Late Iron Age structures recognised and have been interpreted as shrines, albeit on the admittedly circumstantial evidence of the presence of overlying temple structures of later periods (the position of Building 8 apparently being the determining factor in the subsequent location of later religious Building 33). Building 7 was a small, square building comprising a 1m wide and 45cm deep foundation slot, probably for thick close-set planks placed upright in the trench (there is no evidence for where the door was located). The internal space of the building was 4.5m square, with a central circular pit containing a small quantity of late-1st-century-BC pottery, animal bone and a blue glass bead. To the immediate west of this was Building 8, a small circular building (*c.* 6m diameter), comprising a shallow slot with post-holes set in its slot, with a possible south-facing doorway. Within Building 8 was a small pit with a complete grog-tempered jar set upright inside it, interpreted as a votive offering inserted into the floor of the building.

The juxtaposition of the massive foundations of square Building 7 with the slighter circular slot of Building 8 suggests a very deliberate employment of contrasting architectural styles to denote and define different

Plate 3.1 Pre-excavation photo of shrine Buildings 7 (the square foundations) and 8 (the circular founda\tions)

functions for these two buildings, though the attribution of a religious role to either remains speculative. Buildings 9–11 have also been tentatively identified in the close vicinity and may represent further elements of an apparently unenclosed sacred complex (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.2 and Detailed Text 2A_06). If so, the overlapping nature of these additional structures would suggest at least one phase of replacement and thus a relatively prolonged life for this religious focus. A small group of Middle Bronze Age post-holes underlay the shrines (Atkinson and Preston 2001), raising the possibility that the area had retained a significance in local memory.

Given the scant evidence, it is perhaps unwise to suggest that the shrines constituted the nucleus of the early settlement, although their location clearly became central to the settlement during the course of successive development in the mid to late 1st century. Instead, the sacred focus was positioned upon the highest point of a very slight gravel ridge. The relative flatness of the surrounding terrace meant that its elevation, possibly by as much as 0.5–0.7m, was significant. The immediate area around the shrines, particularly north-east of the buildings, was occupied by several large, irregular and very shallow pits or scoops of undetermined use (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.2). They were filled prior to the remodelling of the area and the laying of the gravelled surface in Period 2B, and contained possible destruction debris presumably derived from clearance activity. Their fills thus provide little insight into the original purpose of these features, but the irregularity of some of the pits might suggest they represent tree clearance, in which case the location of one sprawling example in the centre of the triangle of Buildings 7, 8 and 10 could have been especially significant. Any such clearance is most likely to have been directly related to the remodelling, though there is no specific reason that it could not have been earlier, and some pits may have already been filled by the end of the 1st century BC (*e.g.* pit 18710 beneath Building 10).

Occupation
The presence of buildings alongside pits and other occupation features is in little doubt. However, their remains were particularly fragmentary and their recognition has undoubtedly suffered through lack of diagnostic dating evidence. None of the gullies identified as parts of roundhouses (Buildings 3, 4 and 13) can be placed within this period of settlement development with any certainty; all yielded evidence of only a general Late Iron Age date. While there is little dating evidence to phase or sequence these buildings, it appears that each plot probably contained only a few buildings at any one time. It is unlikely that all the Late Iron Age buildings have been identified across the exposed area and that the resulting picture is only partial (Fig. 3.1). It is not really possible with the available data to give any firm indication of the extent or shape of this non-nucleated settlement, apart from saying that it existed.

Indeed, whether the perceived distribution of land boundaries is a reliable indication of the extent of occupation on the lower gravel terrace is unclear. Pits dated to the late 1st century BC are concentrated in the north-west and south-east of the lower terrace. However, it should be noted that less than half of all the Late Iron Age pits are closely dated and that other 1st century BC pits are almost certainly amongst those only broadly dated.

Within this distribution, it has been observed that a number lay adjacent to or even on, boundary ditches, particularly at their terminals (*e.g.* Groups 3 and 4). The peripheral location of such features may suggest that the interiors of at least some of these land units in the northern half of the lower terrace were areas of occupation. The presence of well 7220 (Group 312) and water-hole 6734 (Group 67) amid this complex may add weight to this suggestion.

The contents of the pits across the lower terrace indicate the predominantly domestic nature of the occupation, but also attest to a range of manufacturing and processing activities being undertaken from the early 1st century BC onwards. The most archaeologically visible of these activities was metalworking. Judging by the incidence of crucibles, moulds, metal waste and off-cuts, slag and part-finished objects (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.3), the working of both iron and copper alloys seems to have been carried out in a number of the plots, mostly on the southern side of the site. Hearths and/or drying-ovens, at least some of which are likely to have been associated with this activity, were generally located in the vicinities of buildings, sometimes in association with lengths of curving gullies that have been interpreted as foundation slots of likely wind-breaks.

The northern hinterland
(Fig. 3.2)
The northern hinterland on the upper terrace, as investigated within Area W, was occupied by only a single ditch, 25102 (Group 10). This shallow but long feature, reminiscent of those in the north-west of the lower terrace, was perhaps an important boundary, extending north from the terrace edge. It is possible that its position and alignment were dictated by the presence of Bronze Age barrows, the remains of which, ring-ditch 25200 (Group 2400) and probable ring-gully Structure 6, both lay just to its west (Fig. 2.1). The lack of occupation features in this area, apart from a small number of pits on the terrace edge, suggests that this was beyond the settlement area. It is likely that the upper terrace was farmland, though the single land division reveals little of its organisation. The subsequent location of funerary activity here (see below) would seem to confirm the exterior status of this area.

III. Late Iron Age–early Roman transition settlement (Period 2B)

The development of the Late Iron Age settlement culminated in the creation of a formal infrastructure of metalled roads and the remodelling of at least some of its central elements around the mid 1st century AD, for which a pre-conquest date is posited. These were undertaken as a single concerted programme of works that seems to have radically transformed the physical appearance of the core of the settlement. Only from this period onwards is it possible to see a tangible overall layout and to discuss morphology within a coherent framework of functional areas, *etc.* The physical impact of the various components of this episode on settlement morphology is described here, while the implications and connotations for status, wealth, political and social power/control are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.
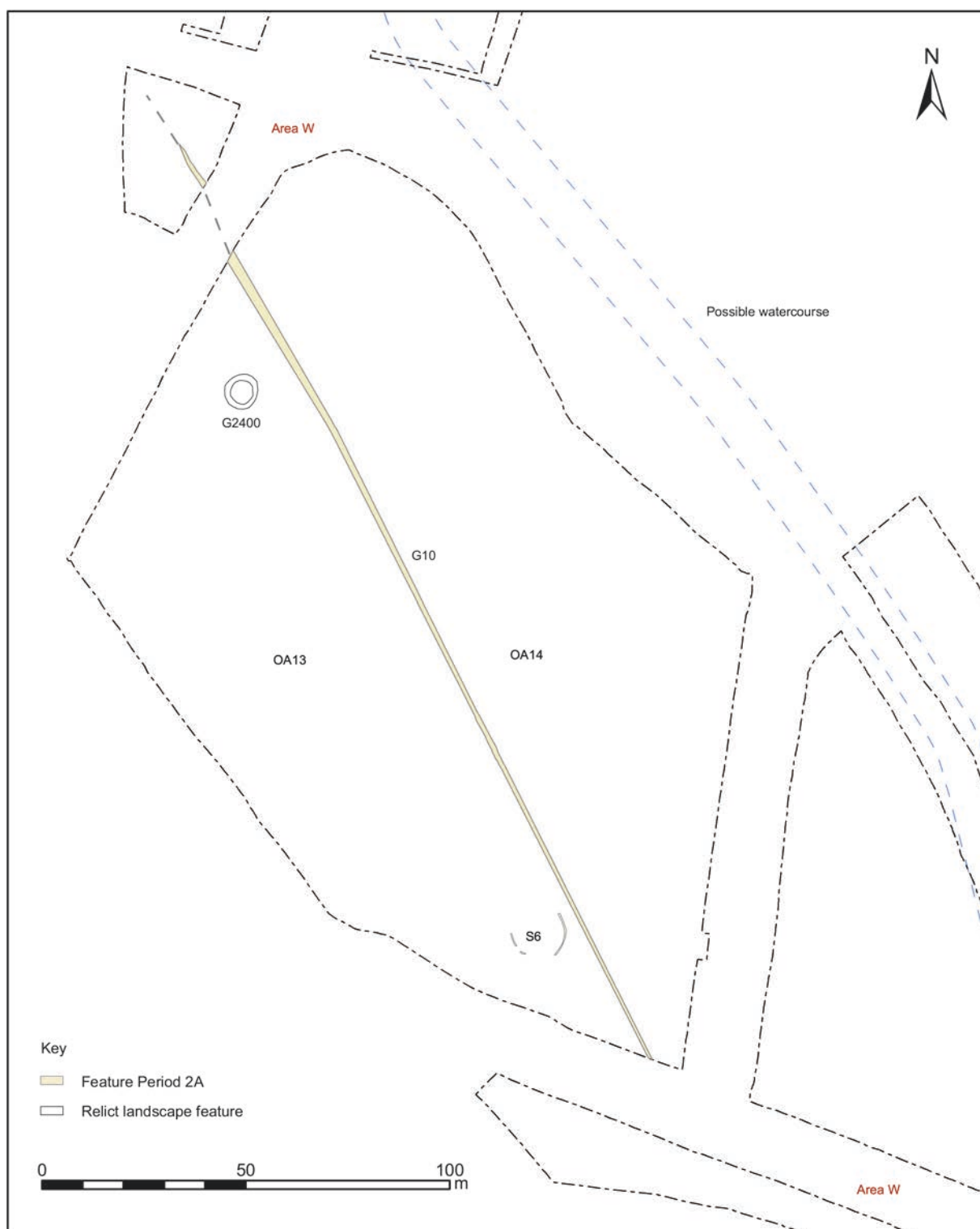
Figure 3.2 Late pre-Roman Iron Age features on the upper terrace (Period 2A)

The lower terrace
(Fig. 3.3)

Groundworks
The primary act of remodelling in Period 2B was the removal of topsoil and subsoil down to the surface of the underlying natural gravel. This was an extensive undertaking that encompassed the central zone of Areas H, I and J, and reached eastwards across the northern parts of Areas L and M. The westward extent of this

undertaking is unknown. Even within the investigated area this truncation could only be identified with any certainty where redeposited gravel, representing either road or occupation surfaces, survived to show that no trace of early soils were present below. No remnants of early soils were encountered beneath the excavated parts of Road 1, as far as the northern limit of the site. However, the continuance of previously established enclosure systems, both to the north and south of the terrace, suggest that topsoil removal was not undertaken on any great scale in

Figure 3.3 Late Iron Age and early Roman features on the lower terrace (Period 2B)
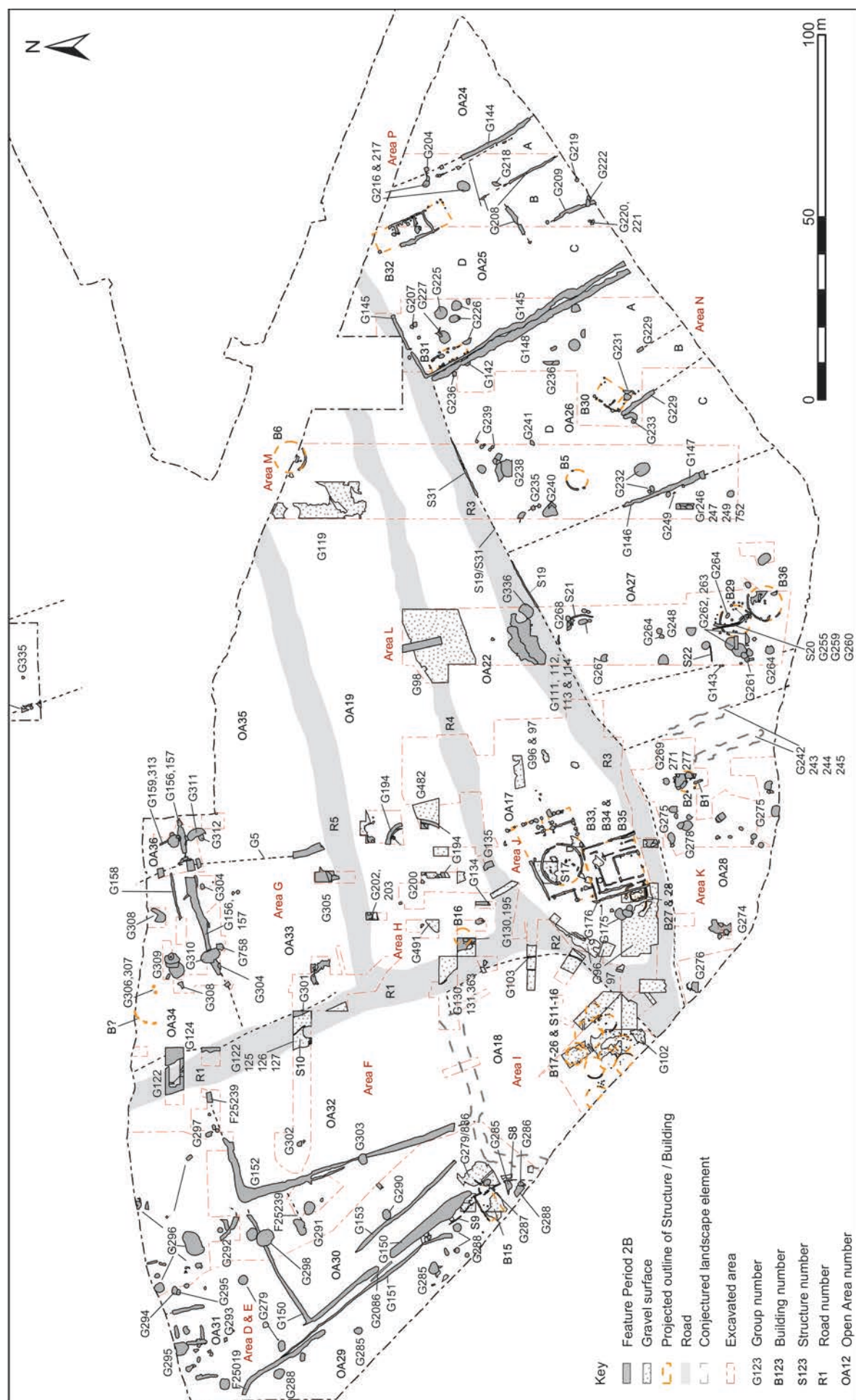
these areas. Indeed, layer 4937 (Open Area 28, Group 271) seems to represent the remnant of an *in situ* ancient soil, cut by Late Iron Age pits. It would thus seem that beyond the central area, the removal of soil was restricted to the planned route of this road.

The postulated extent of soil removal *within the excavated area* (Fig. 3.3) is conservatively estimated at between 10,000–15,000m^2, depending on whether stripping was done only as far as the ends of the metalling of roads 3, 4 and 5 (this approximates to 5,000–3,300m^3 in volume). The removal of soils within the designated area seems to have been total, and in places the underlying surface of the natural sand and gravel was also noted to be particularly loose and disturbed due to this act of truncation (*e.g.* deposit 18135, Area I).

Where necessary, structures and buildings were removed, as exemplified by the occurrence of Structure 3 below Road 1 in Open Area 9 (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.2). This was not limited to those of lesser significance such as domestic dwellings, but was apparently all encompassing; even the shrines (Buildings 7 and 8, and related features, Fig. 6.1) were levelled in Open Area 17 (Area J). Early pits in the vicinity of the shrines appear to have already been partially filled at the time of this episode. Their upper fills contained charcoal-rich material, which has been interpreted as deriving from the demolition of structures in the vicinity, perhaps including the shrines themselves. Even if not directly associated with their demolition, at very least these deposits collectively amount to the levelling of this area (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3). Elsewhere, the undulations of the terrace appear to have been levelled off as hinted in the south-west corner of Area H where a surfaced hollow containing water-hole 6734 (Group 67) was infilled and then capped with a thick and expansive layer of brickearth prior to the construction of Road 1 above (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 2B_01).

Although it is relatively easy to contemplate the removal of soil over such a large area, its deposition or disposal elsewhere is less easily explained. The estimated 5000m^3 of material could have provided a substantial dyke, perhaps 2m high and over 800m long, for example. However, no such earthworks are known in the vicinity of Heybridge and the excavations produced no evidence whatsoever for its alternative disposal. It is doubtful that the small-scale levelling of hollows could account for more than a small fraction of this. However, it is possible that the material was used to reclaim marshy areas such as along the banks of the watercourse through Area B, but all such suggestions remain pure speculation.

Although perhaps the single most arduous task in the process of remodelling the settlement core, the removal of soil and general levelling of the terrace was only the preparation for the imposition of an infrastructure of which the principal elements were a road network and broad accompanying occupation surfaces. It seems reasonable to expect that the roads were the first of the infrastructure features to be constructed; where excavated, no instances of the associated occupation surfaces underlying the roads were recognised, although there was often little to distinguish between them at their interface. Such merging of road and occupation surfaces suggests that the construction of these two elements were closely associated; the laying of the occupation surfaces undoubtedly followed immediately so that both basic infrastructure elements may be regarded as a single undertaking.

Road network
Based upon the enormity of the preceding ground-works, it may be reasonably assumed that the road network was constructed as a single entity. Positive dating for the earliest surfaces, however, is generally scant (Table 3.1), and indeed there are places where it seems the earliest surfaces did not survive. Five roads are identified within the investigated area (Roads 1–5; Fig. 3.3). Road 1 provided the major north–south thoroughfare and Road 3, the east–west. These principal roads merged at Road 2, which continued beyond the south-west limit of the site, almost certainly constituting the main street of the westward spread of occupation. Roads 4 and 5 adjoined Road 1 at right angles and ran east.

While Roads 4 and 5 appear to have been 'side streets' that were laid out in relation to Road 1 rather than set parallel to Road 3, the earliest surfaces of all three east–west-aligned roads were constructed directly upon the stripped surface of the natural gravel. In addition, the overall character of their construction was so similar that the contemporaneity of their inception seems probable. No sequence to the construction of the five metalled roads was identified.

The homogeneity of these roads was further emphasised by the uniformity of their construction. All were constructed on sand foundation layers. The metalled surfaces themselves incorporated riverine gravels, no doubt extracted locally, which had been carefully graded. Mid-sized pebbles of some 10–30mm in diameter had been selected for use, with the finest material used as bedding. Little bonding survived, and although hints of mortar were occasionally encountered, this was usually confined to restricted pockets. Subsequent repairs and resurfacing episodes (which were frequent) varied considerably in method, with bedding layers of various materials, and usually less well-sorted surface components. Further detail on the construction of individual roads is presented in Volume 2 (Section 2.3.3). Here, it is their influence upon other elements of the settlement plan that is of importance. It is clear that, from their inception, these roads represented defining constraints on the planning and subsequent development of the general settlement layout.

It appears that the vicinity of the Late Iron Age shrines, in Area J, provided the focus of this remodelling episode. However, this impression is formed in ignorance of the nature of the settlement further west and therefore may not be entirely accurate. On the basis of the available evidence, the junction of Roads 1 and 3 would seem to be at the centre of the network, and was deliberately laid out west of the Late Iron Age circular shrine in order to avoid it. Road 1 extended only as far south as what later became formalised as the temple precinct, which must, therefore, have been distinguished already in some form that has not survived. Further projection, to create a simple junction with Road 3, would have taken it through the Late Iron Age circular shrine (Building 8), but this was avoided by the 'diversion' denoted by Road 2. Thus, it is apparent that the imposition of the road network signifies settlement modification rather than fundamental change. Key elements of the earlier settlement core were respected, retaining their function if not their form in the remodelled layout (*e.g.* the sacred place) (Figs 6.1 and 6.2). Although not demonstrated by excavation, this may have extended to the formalisation of one or more pre-existing trackways.

Beyond the settlement centre, the imposition of roads seems to have had minimal effect. Road/Track 3 may have been placed along the established frontages of the domestic plots to its south, although there are hints that the frontages were adjusted southwards. The impact of Roads 4 and 5 is largely unknown, although it is suspected that the latter, at least, may have bisected the ends of earlier enclosures that extended to the north. The only clear case of a road encroaching upon a pre-existing land unit is where the rectilinear enclosure to the west of Road 1 had its east side removed. Here the earliest road surfaces lie on top of ditch Group 152. However, Road 1 appears to share the enclosure alignment and may have been positioned on its west edge in an attempt to minimise disruption of the established land use. Thus, it may be argued that the road infrastructure was inserted into the existing settlement without widespread disruption. This apparent fact is at odds with other sites where early road infrastructures have been demonstrated such as Silchester (Fulford 2001), although Skeleton Green (Partridge 1981) could perhaps be deemed similar.

It is noteworthy that 'side' Roads 3, 4 and 5 all lacked identifiable metalled surfaces only some 50–60m east of their junction with Road 1. It appears that they became unsurfaced tracks as they ran east away from the settlement nucleus; their lines denoted only by the presence of fence or hedge slots of adjacent plot frontages and the non-encroachment of occupation features. Regrettably, the continuation of these roads was not established across unexcavated Area A3, although Tracks 3 and 4 seem to have converged by the time they crossed the south corner of Area A4. Geophysical survey to the west of Langford Pond has confirmed a south-east route for Road 2 while the precise northern course of Road 1 remains speculative, but must have involved a crossing of the palaeochannel. The likely course of the roads beyond the settlement confines is discussed in Chapter 8.

Occupation surfaces

Accompanying the considerable task of constructing the road system, large expanses of the areas between the roads were themselves surfaced with graded and compacted gravels (Fig. 3.3). Within the newly defined plots of the central zone (Open Areas 17–19) these surfaces, where surviving, were at their most impressive, particularly in Open Area 18 where later abandonment and rapid burial served to protect this deposit. The surfaces of Open Areas 17 and 19 extended east, between the arms of Road/Tracks 3 and 5, at least as far as Area M. Where excavated in Area L, road and occupation surfaces merged. Cumulatively, they formed a metalled expanse that is hereafter called the 'open space'.

As was the case with the roads, these occupation surfaces were laid directly on the stripped surface of the natural gravel. It is clear that the provision of well-constructed and durable surfaces underfoot was not necessarily governed by need because their extent was almost wholly confined to the area of natural gravel, rather than the brickearth natural, which may have been more in need of surfacing. This may imply that this surfacing covered areas of recognised importance or high status (*e.g.* the temple precinct, Open Area 17). Like the roads, these occupation surfaces were a principal element of the newly imposed infrastructure. Their construction closely mirrors that of the roads themselves, comprising an average of 0.1m thickness of compacted, graded gravels, usually composed of notably larger stones than the road surfaces and in places almost large enough to be called cobbles. Bedding layers of sand were encountered only sporadically. As with the roads, mortar survived only in patches and may simply have been the result of localised repair. In places, large sherds of pottery (often amphora) or animal bone were also deliberately incorporated into the composition of the surface (as in Group 482, Open Area 19).

The central zone

Open Areas 17 and 19 and perhaps 18, being defined by the road system, must reflect real entities of the transitional-period settlement in ways that other more arbitrarily defined areas do not. These are perceived to constitute the 'Central Zone' of the settlement; as far as it falls within the area of investigation. As described above, all three land plots appear to have been given gravel surfaces over their entire extents. These expanses of surface were clearly intended to function as occupation areas and were in use soon after their construction as evidenced by the presence of buildings and associated features in all three. The varying nature of the occupation features also indicates that each plot had a different function from the outset.

Open Area 19, once laid out and surfaced, appears to have remained a relatively open space, occupied only by a, probably oval, ditched enclosure, Group 194, within which were a number of small pits (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3). Neither the minor ditch, nor the small pits within its interior, contained material indicative of its function. Building 16, a roundhouse, lay in the south-west corner, close to the junction of Roads 1 and 4. However, the rather sparse character of this plot was in contrast to that of the settlement areas immediately to the north and west.

Adjacent Open Area 17 (Figs 3.3 and 6.2) formed an irregular, bullet-shaped, plot defined by Roads 2, 3 and 4, which occupied the site of the former shrines (Buildings 7 and 8). A series of structural features seem to indicate the construction of a preliminary and short-lived building (or buildings) set within the gravelled area, alongside Road 3. Building 27 comprised a slot foundation defining three sides of a small structure, probably square and some 4.5m across. A curving length of foundation to the north-east may be a corner of the same building, or alternatively, combined with the curving slot to the south (Group 161), it could be construed to form a second phase of sub-rectangular building, Building 28, measuring about 8.0m by 5.0m. Both of these structures may have been temporary in nature.

Despite the destruction and burial of the Buildings 7 and 8 beneath the new gravel surface, appreciation of their location and significance survived. Indeed, the buildings that now occupied this plot appear to represent the rebuilding, perhaps even a re-founding, of this religious place. Initially, this took the form of the construction of a very large square building (*c.* 15m square), Building 33. This comprised four sets of rectilinear slots defining a series of concentric corridor-like spaces approximately 1.5m apart, resembling a labyrinth. On its southern side all the slots shared a single foundation that ran along the edge of Road 3. All the slots were of a similar dimension (*c.* 0.3m wide and 0.25m deep) and contained the same dark brown sandy silt and pebble fill. They are thought to

have been contemporary with one another and to belong to a single building rather than representing successive enlargements or replacements. Post-holes were found within the slots, some positioned at the terminals of slots which suggest that at least some of these gaps in the foundation were deliberate, rather than the result of truncation.

It is difficult to interpret the nature of the partitioning of the building interior. The innermost 'room', a *c.* 6.7m square space, contained a number of post-holes, mostly in pairs around the walls of the 'room' and particularly in the corners. While occupying a position fronting onto Road 3, it was also clearly located directly above, and centred upon, the earlier circular shrine (Building 8) (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3). Its construction must have necessitated the demolition of Buildings 27/28, which it overlaps.

Shortly after the construction of Building 33, a second structure, Building 34, was built to the north of it. Building 34 was a circular temple of some 11m in diameter, which occupied much of the interior of a trapezoidal, porticoed enclosure (Building 35) that abutted Building 33. Its entrance faced east-north-east. A clustering of post-holes (Structure 17) within Building 3 might denote a structure, possibly a shrine, at the rear (west side) of the *cella* interior. There is, however, an absence of substantial post settings within the building and there is no substantive evidence that it was roofed. Like Building 33, the temple also overlay putative earlier Late Iron Age structure, Building 9, which may itself once have had a religious significance. While these new buildings appear to have been constructed prior to the Roman conquest, the Period 3 structural additions (*i.e.* post-conquest) should be regarded as parts of the same continuing sequence of structural developments. Although there is little evidence of formal demarcation or enclosure of the plot, other than that afforded by the road network, the remainder of its interior was kept clear and open, with the exception of a small cluster of pits behind (west of) the buildings. These may well have had a function related to the temple itself (Chapter 6).

The part of Open Area 18 that was excavated contained the remains of at least ten buildings, representing two or more phases of roundhouse construction. These post-built, stake-built and timbers-in-slot-built structures were clustered together, perhaps forming a tight compound of buildings (Vol. 2, See Detailed Text 2B_09). Further fence-lines and possible structures such as drying racks (*e.g.* triangular Structure 11) were identified between these buildings, though an absence of associated pits and hearths is notable. At only 4–7m in diameter, all of these structures seem rather small compared to 'standard' Iron Age roundhouses, which can reach 10m in diameter or more. However, the dimensions are in keeping with most of the circular structures on the site, so there is no reason to believe these were not dwellings. The repeated construction of indigenous Late Iron Age-style buildings directly on top of an element of the new infrastructure is suggestive of a pre-conquest date for the remodelling episode as a whole.

There appeared to be no tangible eastern limit to either Open Areas 17 or 19 in this transition period. Indeed, as previously mentioned, their gravel surfaces extended, at least partially, as far as Area M. Thus, it seems that much of the area between Roads/Tracks 3 and 5 was a single, open space only crossed by Road 4, and that it was directly

associated with the functions of Open Areas 17 and 19. However, the roads themselves hint at the presence of an undefined, though real, eastern limit to both of these areas in the way that they more or less simultaneously degenerated into unsurfaced tracks approximately 50m east of Road 1.

Although separated from one another by Road 4, Open Areas 17 or 19 appear to have had related, perhaps complementary functions. They both appear to have faced east onto a large 'open space', and both had ample access to them via Roads 3, 4 and 5, suggesting that they were important public spaces. This is entirely in keeping with the assumed continuation of the religious function of the Open Area 17 sacred place and helps shed light on the rather more obscure function of Open Area 19. Whether Open Area 19 shared the trait of establishing new structures in relation to those of the preceding Late Iron Age, can only be a matter for conjecture because the gravel surface and overlying later deposits were not extensively removed. However, a connection or continuum between the earlier angular ditch Groups 63–65 and oval enclosure Group 194 is perhaps possible. Whatever the use of the large open space in front of the newly created temple complex, Open Area 19 may have provided a similar and related space to the north. The absence of domestic features such as rubbish pits that might be expected to have been associated with the roundhouses in Open Area 18 may hint that this plot too had a 'special' function. However, there is nothing to say that rubbish disposal was not undertaken at some distance from these apparent dwellings, or that the pits may all have been located just beyond the limit of the investigated area.

A large circular, slot-built structure at the north-east end of Area M (Building 6) was seemingly the only building to occupy the 'open space' east of Open Areas 17 and 19. Considering its diameter (approximately 9m) and substantial foundation slot, it was a reasonably significant structure. Its location, possibly at the opposite end of the open space to the ovoid enclosure in Open Area 19, suggests an association and, thus, an indirect association with the temple itself. Building 6 may have marked the eastern limit of this open area. However, unexcavated prevailing boundary alignments across Area A3 and ditches Group 327/329/330 and Group 328/331 in Area A4 (Fig. 1.6) could delineate an even further eastward extent to this area between Roads 4 and 5. Area A4 also contained fragments of gravel surface that could be part of the same scheme as that further west in the 'central zone'.

Northern and Southern Zones
The nature of occupation within the defined plots of both the Northern and Southern Zones seems to have remained static, perhaps even reinforced by the imposition of the road network and the gravel surfaces of the Central Zone. Given the poor definition of the dating of Late Iron Age features, and particularly the general lack of diagnostic material from structural remains, it is difficult to discern change in details of this land use.

The frontages of the south plots now appear to have been marked by a fence, as denoted by shallow foundation slots that ran alongside the road/track through Open Areas 25–27. The provision of such boundary markers may have been made necessary by the fact that this thoroughfare was not surfaced in this vicinity, and was intended to prevent northward encroachment from the plots into the 'open

space' on the opposite side of Road 3. It is only possible to speculate as to whether the transition from circular to rectilinear building plans and the shift from middle-of-the-plot to road frontage positions pre- empted, accompanied, or was stimulated by the central zone remodelling. In Open Area 18 traditional-style buildings continued to be erected. However, there is some evidence for the replacement of circular buildings with those of rectilinear form (*e.g.* Open Area 25) and in the Southern Zone the rectilinear buildings seem to conform closely to the newly imposed Road 3 frontage. Roundhouses appear to have been more numerous than strip buildings, though this may be due to differential survival and recognition of the remains: roundhouses tended to have deeper slot foundations, the remains of which were more obvious than the shallow post-and-slot construction of the strip buildings. Few convincing examples of direct replacement of buildings were recorded, though in Open Area 26, Building 13 (Period 2A) appears to have been succeeded by Building 32 — though the earlier structure may have been significantly earlier.

In contrast to the enclosures along the southern side of the lower terrace, the system of land division across the northern side included a number of entrances and tracks or droveways that suggest a predominantly agricultural use — perhaps stock management within paddocks and pasture. The incidence of occupation features, such as pits, was relatively low with only a single rectilinear building (Building 15) located at the southern end of this ditch system. Significantly, this was positioned at the junction of a number of enclosures and was evidently integral to the enclosure system. Where present, pitting was less dense and lacked evidence of manufacturing processes such as metalworking, in contrast to the interiors of the enclosures along the south side of the terrace.

It is notable that part of this new enclosure system (Open Areas 29–32) seems to display a radial layout that may suggest that the occupation activity now had a tangible centre that perhaps lay just to the west of the shrines. Thus, the developments of the earlier 1st century AD may be interpreted as a move toward a more formal and probably nucleated settlement plan. It is probable that the settlement, at least on its eastern side, reached its greatest extent during this period of re-organisation and that it was almost wholly confined to the lower terrace. An elliptical east–west spread of occupation is thus proposed with an estimated total area of some 20ha. However, it must be borne in mind that the relatively large size of enclosures and probable low density of buildings within them may serve to inflate the perceived settlement extent. This is undoubtedly also the case for the later periods of settlement.

Planning
As discussed above, the imposition of settlement infrastructure (*i.e.* the road network and occupation surfaces) was a single and rapid undertaking. As such, it is implicit that there was an element of deliberate and formal planning in its inception and construction. While it is clear that the layout of the transitional period settlement was influenced both by a mixture of geological and topographical considerations and by pre-existing settlement divisions and structures, it is evident that a degree of regular, arguably measured planning was also imposed.

The broadest level of this planning was imposed by the north–south division of the lower terrace into three broadly equal parts. Road 1 seems to have served as a base-line; to its east the area between the palaeochannel and lower terrace edge is subdivided by Roads 3 and 5 into three units, each roughly 100m wide (Fig. 1.6). This basic division had a tangible and lasting influence upon settlement layout thereafter and is the basis of the division of Heybridge into 'Northern, Central and Southern Zones' (also see Chapter 2).

While the courses of Roads 1 and 3 were probably already established by earlier trackways, Roads 4 and 5 were clearly newly founded and laid out in relation to the existing main routes. Again, Road 1 seems to have provided the baseline for this, with the new roads being set at right-angles to it. Conformity with Road 3 was obviously deemed of secondary importance, for although all three were roughly parallel at their western ends, Roads 3 and 4 gradually converged to the east, probably meeting in the vicinity of Areas A3 and possibly even merging with Road 5 in Area A4. While Road 1 provided a baseline for their *alignment*, Road 3 appears to have been used as the baseline of their *spacing*. At the perceived core of the settlement (*i.e.* through Open Areas 17 and 19), the three east–west roads were regularly spaced at approximately 31m apart, from edge to edge (or 35m centre to centre).

Although not directly evidenced by the archaeological record, it is likely that other elements, such as the temple precinct frontage, were laid out following this scheme at the same time.

Atkinson and Preston (1998, 104) suggested the *actus* (a Roman unit of measurement of *c.* 35.5m) might have been employed in the transition-period layout of the site; the central plots of Areas H and J, when measured from road centre to centre, may have been laid out as 35.5m squares. However, some caution is necessary since the results depend on which distances are used and how accurately they can be measured. Slightly different measurements are obtained from measuring road centre to centre compared with edge to edge and the accuracy depends on good recognition and survival of the centres and edges. It has also been suggested that the plots of the Southern Zone might conform to an area of approximately half an *iugerum* (Atkinson and Preston 1998, 104). However, subsequent revision of their boundaries for this volume has meant some boundary ditches are now interpreted as internal subdivisions, thus implying fewer and larger plots. Measured along their road frontages, these revised plots vary between 50–60m wide, and since the plots almost certainly terminate at the lower terrace edge, they vary in estimated length between 80–100m. Although the plots do exhibit a high degree of regularity, the theory that they were laid out in multiples of *actus* or *iugerum* can thus no longer be sustained. It is concluded that these southern plots, despite the regularity of their layout, probably pre-date the establishment of the road infrastructure.

In view of the considerable effort expended in preparing the ground for the laying of roads and occupation surfaces, it would not be unreasonable to assume that there was indeed a significant element of formal planning in the settlement morphology. The combination of geological and topographical considerations and the planner's vision produced an ordered settlement layout that was essentially inward-looking and focussed on the core of the site.

Judging from the parts of the settlement exposed by the exacavations, the plots of Open Areas 17 and 19, together with the elongated open area bounded by Roads 3 and 5, were at the centre of the plan. The domestic land units to the north, south, and perhaps the west, all looked in toward these principal elements, giving the impression of a village around its green. Key to this impression is the alignment created by the east façade of the temple, and the approach to it from the east. Parallels for this type of settlement layout are, as yet, unknown in Britain, although parts of the Roman settlement at Westhawk Farm, Kent (Booth *et al*. 2008), are reminiscent of some elements at Heybridge. Comparable sites must thus be sought abroad, in the 'secondary centres' of Gaul and Belgica. It is perhaps no coincidence that Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Cadoux 1991) also has a major religious and social function.

Dating of the imposition of infrastructure

Given the rarity of instances of settlement planning and the creation of metalled road networks that have been either argued or proven to pre-date the Roman conquest, it is of crucial importance that the evidence and reasoning is set out for that at Elms Farm being of Late Iron Age date. Such an occurrence has huge implications for our understanding of the emergence of the earliest 'towns', of the nature and function of principal Late Iron Age centres in general and of the process of Romanisation itself.

Without simply duplicating the detailed evidence assembled in the individual area summaries in Volume 2, it is worth considering the key dating evidence here. In hindsight, it is unfortunate that more extensive areas of both roads and occupation surfaces were not fully investigated and that the 'date bracketing' of these is not more closely defined using greater numbers of features immediately above and below their earliest phases. However, Table 3.1 presents both the latest dated features *below*, and the earliest dated *above,* the various infrastructure elements where there is the excavated evidence.

Roads
(Pl. 3.2; Table 3.1)

Although relatively little of the road sequences were investigated and so our knowledge of other, more datable, discrete features both above and below is limited, some of the roads can be demonstrated to overlie and disrupt a number of major landscape features of the early settlement. In particular, the ditches of Areas F, G and H (Table 3.1) are the latest encountered features beneath Roads 1 and 5. The dating of these is broadly 'Late Iron Age', based on the presence of wheel-thrown grog-tempered wares and a lack of Romanising material, although some may be as early as the late 1st century BC (*i.e.* Period 2A) on the basis of imports and hand-thrown vessels. Where discrete features such as underlying pits occur (beneath Roads 1 and 3) there are similarly mixed results. Water-hole 6734 (Pl. 3.2), being as early as late 1st century BC, is too distanced in time to be of particular use here, although the fact that it required concerted levelling and consolidation prior to the construction of Road 1 above may hint that the interval was not too great. Pit Group 93 is more likely to have been closer in time to the construction of Road 3. Although dated to the Late Iron Age, the presence of a very small quantity of Romanising

Plate 3.2 Water-hole 6734 post-excavation

Infrastructure	Area	Dating evidence and position	Date
Road 1	F	Ditch seg. 10536 (Group 152), below	LIA
	F	Ditch seg. 10229 (Group 8), below	Late 1st BC–early 1st AD
	H	Ditch seg. 6865 (Group 21), below	LIA (poss. BC?)
	H	Well 6734 (Group 67), below	LIA (poss. BC)
	F	Pit 10552 (Group 299), above	mid 1st AD
Road 2	I, J	-	-
Road 3	K	Pit 4779 (Group 93), below	LIA/earliest Roman
	J	Post-holes 22353 and related features (Group 110), above	LIA
	L	Pit 20481 (Group 42), above	Early–mid 1st AD
Road 4	H, J	-	-
Road 5	G	Ditch seg. 7630 (Group 5), below	Late 1st BC
	H	Ditch segs 16053 and 16055 (Group 2), below	LIA (early 1st AD?)
Occupation surface	H	Pits 6932 and related features (Group 26), below	mid 1st AD,
		Ditch 25047 (Group 194), above	mid 1st AD
Occupation surface	I	Pit 21050 (Group 22), below	LIA
		Roundhouse Building 17 , above	mid 1st AD
Occupation surface	J	Pits 5270, 21513 and 21972 (Group 23), below	LIA
		Building 33, (notionally) above	LIA, mid 1st AD
		Building 34, (notionally) above	mid–late 1st AD
Occupation surface	L	-	-
Occupation surface		Building 6, above	mid–late 1st AD

Table 3.1 Dating evidence for the earliest roads and occupation surfaces

pottery in its upper fills may suggest a date toward the mid 1st century AD.

Due to the dominance of the road network on subsequent settlement development there are no ditches *overlying* its metalled surfaces. Instead, all we have to supply a *terminus ante quem* for its creation are a few instances of pits and post-hole clusters that cut the earliest surviving road surfaces. Pit 10552 (Group 299) was cut into Road 1. Its fill sequence indicates a relatively prolonged infilling during the first half of the 1st century AD with a small quantity of Romanising fabrics present in its top. Similarly, pit 20481 (Group 42) was the earliest in a sequence of intercut Late Iron Age pits that intruded upon Road 3. A pre-conquest date for the inception of these, if not all of the, roads would thus appear to be assured.

As is evident from Table 3.1, there are no reliable relationships to date the origins of either Roads 2 or 4. However, this lack is not particularly detrimental to our understanding of the early road chronology as both may be viewed as integral to the whole. Thus, the dating evidence for Roads 1, 3 and 5 should be equally applicable to them.

Occupation surfaces

Like the roads, only very limited areas of the expansive gravelled occupation surfaces were removed. However, the fact that in places they merged imperceptibly with the earliest road surfaces, and both are deemed to have been laid as a single scheme of works, suggests that the *terminus ante quem* supplied by the earliest features to cut them, of which there are many, is readily applicable to the roads themselves.

The chronology and sequence of the temple area (Open Area 17) is particularly pertinent to this (Figs 6.1 and 6.2). Here, the Period 2A shrines and pits were cleared and a new surface laid during the first half of the 1st century. Those features that were reliably sealed, principally pits on the eastern side of the area, were wholly Late Iron Age in character and generally contained burnt material speculated to be derived from the clearance of the sacred place prior to its remodelling. No Romanising material was recovered from any context below the surfacing. It is conceded that the earliest buildings on top of the occupation surface did yield occasional sherds of pottery in Romanising fabrics, particularly circular temple Building 34, but it is unclear in most cases whether these should date the construction or the demolition of the

buildings. The early surfaces of Road 3 alongside this area were cut by a number of post-holes from which only Late Iron Age material was collected.

In adjacent Open Areas 18 and 19, the surfacing and its layers produced only small quantities of Late Iron Age pottery. Although very few underlying features were investigated, those identified were of an overwhelmingly Late Iron Age character. Only pits 6932 and 16348 (Group 26) hint that the Open Area 19 surfacing could have been relatively late in the first half of the 1st century due to their small Romanising ceramics content. That the immediately overlying features (*e.g.* ovoid enclosure 25047) contain similar assemblages could be interpreted as evidence of gradual and limited change *prior* to the conquest although, as discussed in Chapter 2, conservatism into the Roman period as late as *c.* AD 70 could equally be contemplated.

In summary, although the available dating evidence from features immediately above and below the earliest road and occupation surfaces is not particularly well defined, the simple fact is that no Roman-period features have been identified as pre-dating them. With some Romanising influence within a number of the ceramic assemblages, a date toward the mid 1st century seems most appropriate for their creation.

The northern hinterland

(Fig. 3.4, Pl. 3.3)

As stated above, the collective evidence from Area W and other excavations conducted to the north of Elms Farm indicates that the step between upper and lower terraces clearly defined the northern extent of the Late Iron Age settlement. Around the end of the 1st century BC, the simple land division denoted by ditch 25102 (Group 10) was replaced with a more substantial system of ditches (Fig. 3.4). This subdivided the upper terrace landscape into more tangible units of land, perhaps large field enclosures (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3). The alignment of this system appears to have been influenced, in part, by the earlier boundary, which seems to have been incorporated into the new system at the very north end of Area W. However, the southern divergence of major north–south ditch 25199 (Group 314) suggests that the remains of the Bronze Age barrow was also used as a point of reference in the landscape.

Rather than simply extending up to, and incorporating, the terrace edge, the southern limit of this field system was defined by a stepped arrangement of ditches 25194
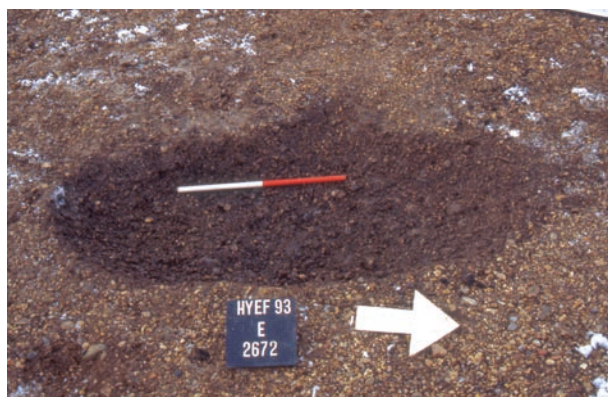

Plate 3.3 Post-excavation photographs of pyre pits 2672 (a) and 2615 (b)
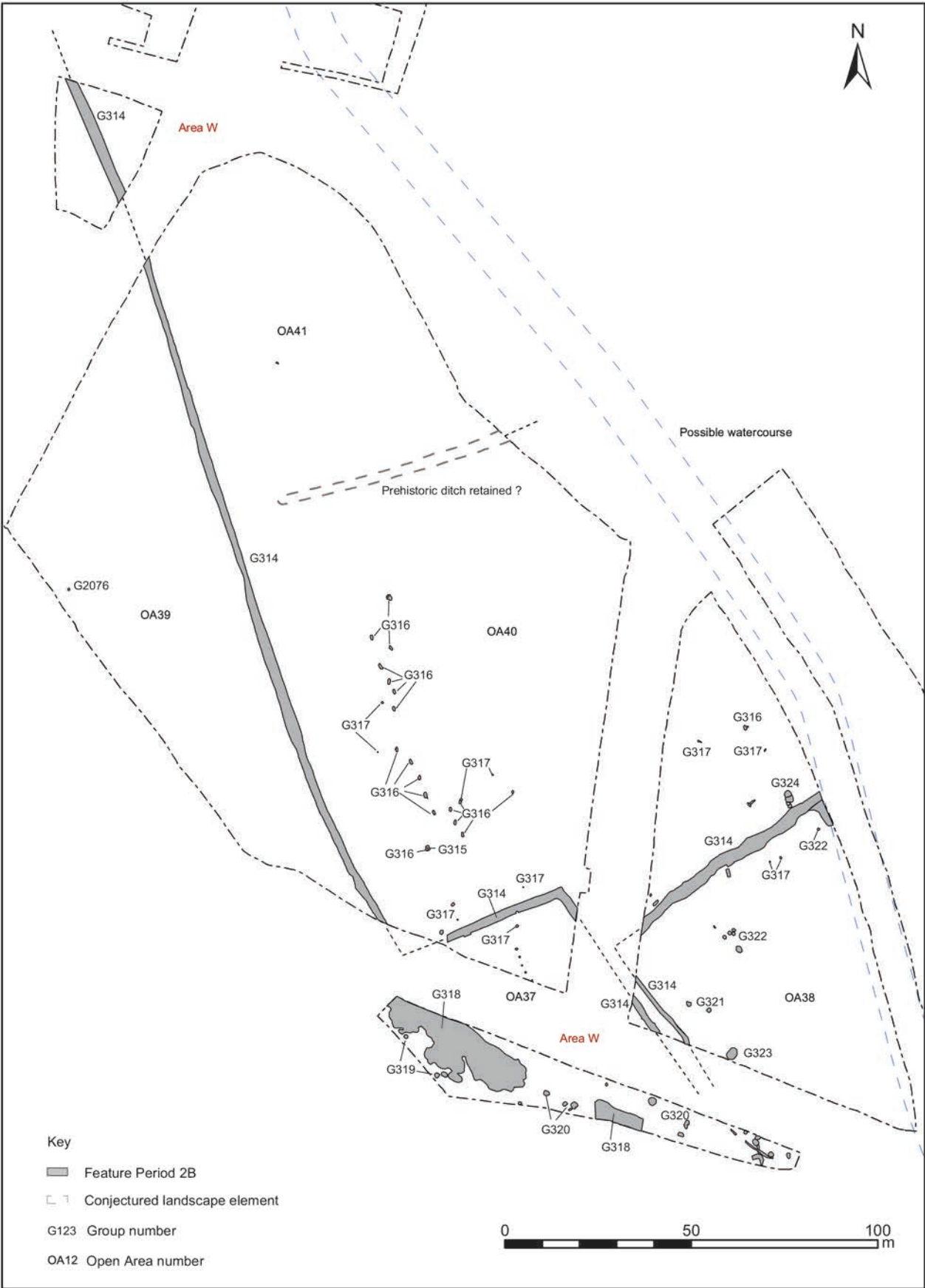
Figure 3.4 Late Iron Age and early Roman features in the northern hinterland (Period 2B)

(Group 314) and 25188 (Group 321) that is reminiscent of the relic field systems seen elsewhere in Essex, such as in the Dengie and Shoebury areas (*e.g.* Rodwell 1978; Rackham 1986; but see Rippon 1991 for a contrasting view). Rather than, or in addition to, the terrace edge itself, this stepped boundary now marked the clearest distinction between the settlement and its hinterland. Pits, principally located at the foot of the terrace step, but also scattered across the terrace itself, were confined to the southern fringe of the field system and were probably indicative of the 'over spill' of occupation activity from the settlement itself (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 2B_34).

Although ecofactual evidence of this date is absent, it is presumed that the fields were most likely under cereal cultivation, but this was clearly not the only function of the settlement 'in-fields'. The southern part of the field system was also the location of distinctive funerary activity that comprised a number of pyre sites (Pl. 3.3), 'pyre-related features' and a single cremation burial. These were aligned upon the surrounding field boundaries, principally the line of axial boundary ditch 25199 (Group 314). Thus, the immediate settlement hinterland clearly had various, co-existing, uses; the meaning and implications of which are pursued in Chapters 5 and 8. A parallel for the positioning of funerary activities just beyond the settlement may be found in the peripheral cemeteries of pre-conquest Baldock (Burleigh 1995, 179) and in the more extreme case of Late Iron Age pyres and burials being located at some distance from settlement on the Westhampnett Bypass (Fitzpatrick 1997a).

The early 1st-century use of Area W as a 'pyre field' was short-lived; perhaps either simply being located elsewhere or ceasing as a result of change or evolution in funerary practice. It is significant that, within the south end of Area W, there was virtually no evidence of activity except that clustered along the line of the ditches denoting the edge of the field systems. This suggests that this boundary location had acquired a liminal significance upon which a number of disposal practices (including cremation burial) were focussed. Given that domestic rubbish pits lay to the south and burials on or to the north, land use seems to have been fairly rigidly split between domestic/habitation on one side and ritual/rural on the other and may have even represented the accepted edge of the settlement at this time. Indeed, there is a growing realisation (*e.g.* Chadwick 1999) that ditches and other boundaries are actually often foci of activity, not necessarily separating people, but perhaps bringing them together.

Settlement shape and extent
With the insertion of a clearly visible infrastructure, this is perhaps the first point at which reliable estimates of settlement shape, extent and density can be made. Indeed, the settlement would appear to have reached its maximum size during this transition period and it may be argued that this is the *only* time that such consideration is likely to be accurate. It is likely that all settlement occupation was confined to the lower terrace, though clearly some activities spilled over into the hinterland above and the marsh below. The east–west roads and the curvature apparent in the land divisions on the west side of the site suggest something of an elongated elliptical spread of occupation across this terrace (see Chapter 8). Quite what is included in the assessment of settlement area is, of course, a matter of some debate (*e.g.* Hiddink 1991, 204–5), though it seems reasonable to include the whole of each plot that contains one or more buildings or at least signs of relatively intense settlement activity such as pit digging. Hence, an extent of approximately 20ha has been estimated, although in the absence of explicitly defined boundaries such as dykes or walls it is quite possible that the division between settlement and countryside was rather blurred. Although the transition from roundhouse to strip-building is identified as a probable feature of the transition-period settlement, the legibility of buildings remains a problem. Only three or four strip-buildings have been recognised in Open Areas 25 and 26 (Buildings 30, 31 and 32) and a single building on the edge of Open Area 29 (Building 15). Although little is known about the nature of the settlement to the west of the Elms Farm excavation, it may be possible to estimate the number of domestic occupation plots to total 20–24. If each contained a single dwelling occupied by a single family averaging five persons, then a total population of 100–120 may be reasonably arrived at. However not all of the buildings present may have actually represented dwellings, but rather may have served as workshops or shelters for animals. For example, around Buildings 31 and 32 there was evidence of metalworking in the form of hearths and distinctive, often square, small pits containing working debris occupying the front of the plot.

IV. The early Roman settlement (Period 3)
(Figs 3.5–3.7)

Although defined archaeologically as a distinct period by the appearance of Romanising artefacts such as pottery and metalwork, in terms of settlement development the early Roman period (Period 3) saw near-seamless continuity from its predecessor (Figs 2.4–2.5 and 3.5–3.7). The transition-period remodelling imposed a comprehensive and durable infrastructure that continued to serve the needs of the settlement into the 2nd century and beyond. Developments of the later 1st to mid 2nd century can be seen as relatively minor additions and enhancements within this established structure. Apart from the continuing development of the temple complex, there is little evidence of enrichment of the settlement in terms of architectural diversity and grandeur, nor is there any sign of improved facilities or more varied functions. No new public buildings were constructed, apart from additions within the temple complex. If anything, the settlement would appear to have lost impetus almost immediately, or that it stabilized successfully.

Roads
The road system was apparently well maintained within this period, with evidence of use-wear and multiple resurfacing and repair episodes recorded for all the roads. The opportunity was taken to widen roads, most clearly seen with Roads 1 and 5 (Vol. 2, Section 2.4.1), with new bonded surfaces being constructed over infilled transition-period roadside ditches, and new ditches established alongside. Such roadside ditches appear on both sides of the roads for the first time (*e.g.* ditches Group 361 and Group 354, either side of Road 1). This may have been necessitated by the construction of more distinctly cambered surfaces. These new surfaces often
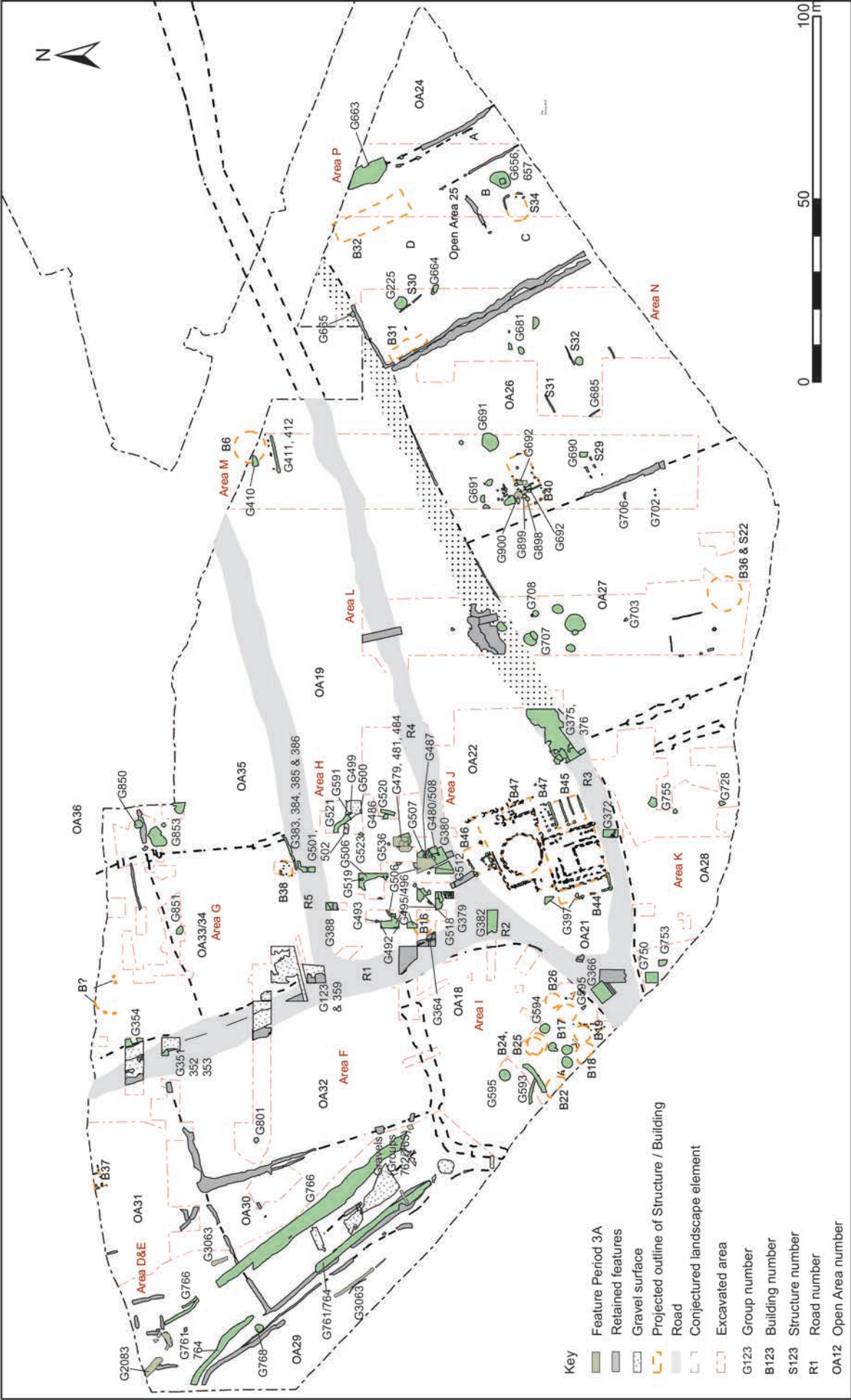
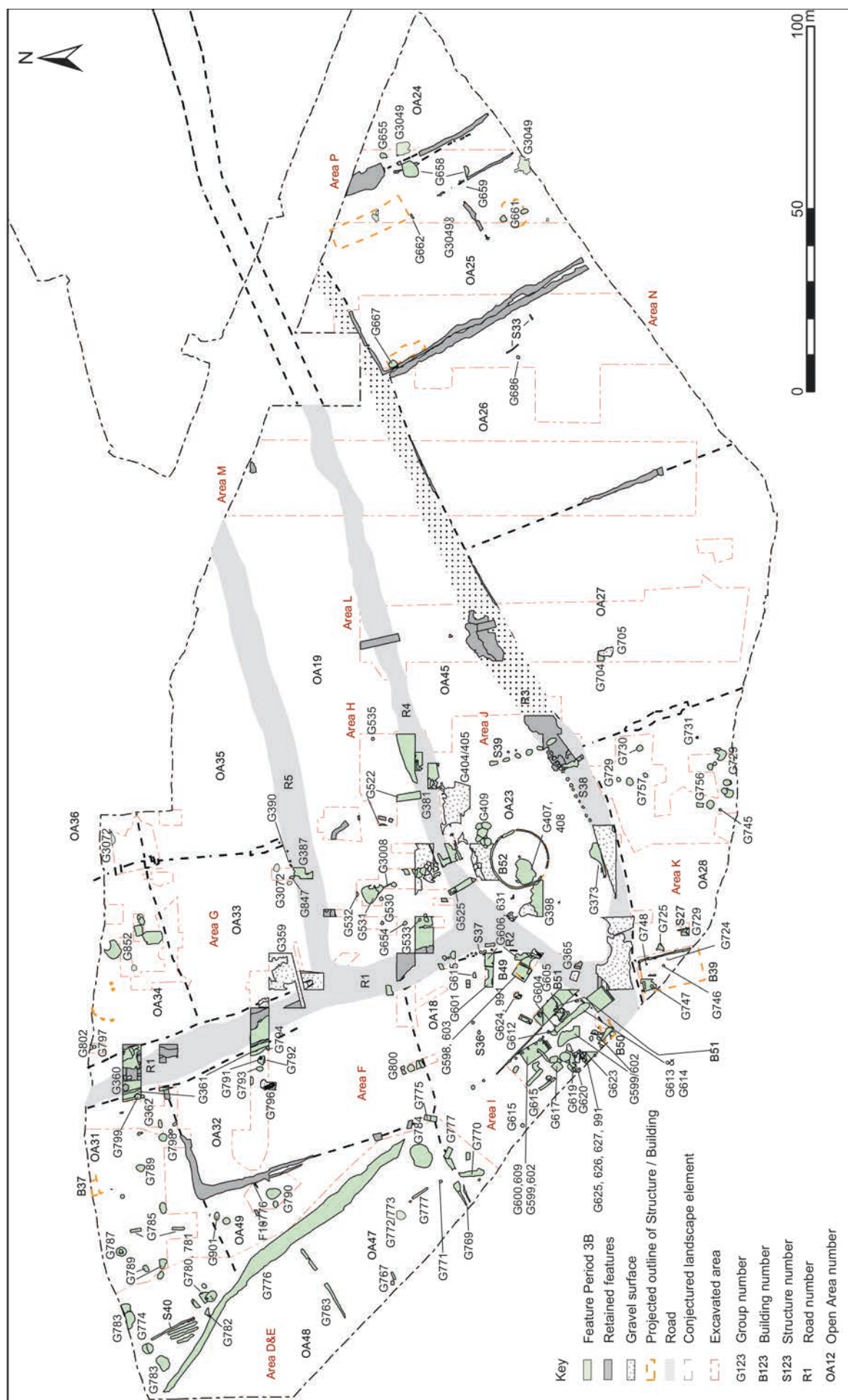Figure 3.5 The early Roman settlement on the lower terrace (Period 3A)

Figure 3.6 The early Roman settlement on the lower terrace (Period 3B)

incorporated surviving parts of earlier ones. The need to maintain the road system, on what appears to have been a regular and concerted basis, suggests that it saw a significant amount of traffic. Judging by the level of maintenance afforded to it, Road 1 would seem to have been the principal thoroughfare of the settlement in the early Roman period. By the same criterion, the accumulation of surfaces and deposits, Road 4 was also important and well used.

Beyond the settlement centre it appears that although the road surfaces had originally extended at least as far east as Area L, they were no longer actively maintained, but gradually degraded to tracks, the lines of which were perpetuated by the land plots that fronted onto them. The apparent decline in the importance of Road 3 should also be noted, as it saw very little repair work beyond the end of the 1st century. Its latest surviving surfaces were difficult to date closely, but there is no evidence that requires them to be later than 2nd century in the core of the settlement, while the latest surface out towards the east was mid 1st century.

The central zone
(Pl. 3.4–3.6)
After a period of more-or-less direct continuity from the transitional period through to the end of the 1st century, the main public areas at the centre of the settlement (Open Areas 19, 21 and 22) underwent minor changes in the first half of the 2nd century, while Area 18 saw major changes (see Figs 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6).

Developments within Open Area 19 were relatively minor during the later 1st century. Parts of the plot interior were resurfaced, and the ovoid enclosure replaced with a slightly larger one (ditches 25257 and 25258), this time with an eastern entrance. This was short-lived, however. The ditches were probably infilled before the end of the 1st century, and certainly before the second resurfacing. Although the few pits and traces of minor structures (Structures 23 to 26) revealed nothing of the plot's function, the presence of clusters of storage jar ovens (Pl. 3.4), set into the gravel surfacing, may be more telling. Concentrated along the south side of the plot, closest to the temple, it is possible that they evidence the production of foodstuffs associated with the religious focus (Chapter 6), possibly for seasonal use at times of festivals.

A second, mid 2nd-century resurfacing of the plot interior marked something of a change, sealing the internal enclosure ditch and the storage jar hearth remains, and marking a distinct fall off in the incidence of pits. The plot appears to have been cleared of obstructions and well 6280 (Group 531, Vol. 2, Detailed Text 3_19) was constructed at its centre. The well may have been the focus of the area at this time, perhaps enhancing its public or communal facility. A function as a market place seems possible.

The change in Open Area 18 was more dramatic (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 3_11–15). The roundhouse structures of the transition period continued to occupy the original gravel surface, with at least one phase of replacements of identical character. Apart from the appearance of a small number of large rubbish pits amongst them, the layout and content of this plot appears to have remained static at least until the end of the 1st century. However, in the early 2nd century, this occupation was completely abandoned, the buildings demolished and the little-worn gravel surface buried under a 0.3m thick deposit of dumped rubbish-rich soils. The plot was reoccupied soon after, but the ensuing mid 2nd-century activity was of a different nature. The large early plot, bounded only by Roads 1 and 2 and to the north by a ditch, was now subdivided into at least two plots by major fence-line Structure 36 (Fig. 3.6). While activity within the north-east sub-plot was perhaps primarily domestic, with buildings fronting onto the roads, that of the south-west sub-plot is more enigmatic. The presence of what is interpreted as a monumental post, Group 617, and a possible latrine trench, Group 613–614, (Fig. 3.6 and Pl. 3.5) suggest a rather more public or communal aspect, lacking domestic activity such as pits but including storage jar hearths like those in Open Area 19.

As was the case with Open Area 18 and 19, the later 1st century was generally a period of continuity within the temple area (Open Area 23, Figs 3.5 and 6.4). The Period 2B buildings (Buildings 33, 34 and 35) were retained and the complex augmented with the addition of a number of new structures (Buildings 44, 45, 47). These were positioned against or close to the existing buildings, mostly to either side of the temple and its enclosure. The new buildings were aligned on the enclosure frontage and therefore extended the frontage across the whole width of the plot. Building 44 (14×3.5m) is considered to be a westward extension or lean-to on Building 33. It had substantial wall foundation slots with post-holes within them, and a centrally placed door on its west wall. Building 47 was a small, rectangular, structure (8×4m) inserted into the corner formed by the east wall of Building 33 and the south wall of temple enclosure Building 35. Its south wall and interior structure were represented by a pair of parallel lines of post-holes while the east wall was slot-built. It seems to be the result of the ongoing, perhaps somewhat opportunistic, development of the temple complex. Given that Building 45 seems to have been constructed immediately alongside it soon afterwards, it is likely that it was accessed from the east, though an entrance from the temple enclosure, through the south wall of Building 33, cannot be discounted.

Building 45 is a further addition to the temple complex, constructed to the east of Building 33 and represented by four parallel foundation slots and a number of post-holes, defining a building *c.* 7×8m. Although not particularly well aligned on the existing buildings to its north and west, it appears that Building 45 was a further attempt to utilise the space created by adjoining Buildings 33 and 35. Whether this was in addition to, or a replacement of Building 47 is uncertain, although the former is more likely. Building 45 overlay the site of square 'shrine' Building 7 (Period 2A), but whether or not this was deliberate is uncertain. Building 46 was added to the north of temple enclosure Building 35, a rectilinear structure constructed from posts, some of which were linked by shallow slots. Restricted by the temple and Road 4, this building cannot have been more than 5m wide. Although only traced for some 8m east to west, it is possible that it was originally the length of the north wall.

In the early 2nd century, this whole complex of buildings was removed and replaced by a single, slightly larger, circular temple (Building 52) (Figs 3.6 and 6.5). This was a structure some 15.7m in diameter, delimited by a foundation slot filled with a packing deposit around a series of upright posts, the positions of which are evident in the base of the slot. On the east-north-east side a

Plate 3.4 Examples of storage-jar ovens (6230 and 6206) and reconstruction drawing showing how it is thought they were used

Plate 3.5 Section across the possible latrine trench (613–614) in Open Area 18

3m-wide doorway was marked by a threshold of mortared septaria rubble and gravel. No ancillary buildings accompanied this enlarged temple. Fence-lines (*e.g.* Structure 38) and shallow ditches were placed along the roadsides and a massive wooden screening wall (Structure 39, Pl. 3.6) was constructed across the eastern frontage between Roads 3 and 4, thus defining a distinct perimeter or *temenos* around this single central building. The whole area now formed a precinct housing the functions previously accommodated within Building 35, the new precinct wall presumably replacing the porticoed façade of that building. While pitting within the earlier temple area was restricted to the rear of the temple, 2nd-century depositional activity was relocated to the front of precinct (Vol. 2, Section 2.4.1), perhaps taking on a new or modified ritual aspect (Chapter 6).

The precinct was resurfaced with gravel following the rebuilding of the temple. At the same time, at least the western end of the 'open space' between Tracks 3 and 5, just beyond the temple precinct front wall, was similarly resurfaced. Its open, public nature seems to have been preserved throughout the early Roman period although Building 6, at its western end, evidently passed out of use.

Thus, it appears that the developments within the various core areas during the early Roman period were related. Whether or not the more major changes of the early–mid 2nd century were all parts of a single episode is not clear, though it is notable that the surfacing of plot interiors often occurred at roughly the same time as that of the adjacent roads. Shared traits between the areas are evident in the form of feature types (*e.g.* storage-jar hearths) and in the open nature of their interiors. The various changes to the layout were minor and the overall infrastructure remained firmly in place. Hence, in overview, these changes amount to broad continuity of the layout and function of this area of the settlement centre. However, this is not to say that such acts as the replacement of the temple were without significance; this subject is discussed elsewhere (Chapter 6).

The Northern Zone
The Northern Zone perhaps saw the greatest development in terms of changes to its land division (Figs 3.5 and 3.6), while the broad land units of the remainder of the settlement area remained largely static. However, the progressive modifications undertaken from the late 1st to mid 2nd century amounted to little more than a simplification of the pre-transition period system of enclosure that had survived, particularly in the north-west of the settlement. Presumably, the earlier system, with its narrow route ways and shallow multiple ditches, was either no longer appropriate or else had simply silted up and the opportunity was taken to modify them. The changes closely followed the key elements of the earlier system, maintaining the same north-west–south-east alignment and the tendency to curve off to the north-west. The early changes perpetuated the channelling nature of the system with ditches Group 761/764, and 766/2083 collectively defining a broad track or droveway that appears to have been surfaced at its south end (see Vol. 2, Detailed Text 3_35 and Fig. 3.5). These were associated with the continued occupation of Building 15, which may have been strategically placed at a major point of access between the various enclosures of the Central Zone.

Later modifications resulted in the creation of a relatively simple system of large land plots, one either side of ditch Group 776 (Fig. 3.6). The land plot to the east of this ditch extended as far as Road 1 with no evidence of

Plate 3.6 Excavated post-holes of the temple precinct wall (Structure 39) and the flint-rubble wall that replaced it

any subdivisions in its interior. The southern extent of these enclosures was marked by ditches Group 769 and 770. These signify a clear limit between the central and outer zones for the first time. By the mid 2nd century, Building 15 had ceased to exist, although occupation in the vicinity clearly had not; wells 9421 (Group 772) and 8188 (Group 787), the latter probably associated with Building 37, were accompanied by an increased incidence of pits and hearths that attest to domestic activity across this zone. Alterations to the ditch system also created a 'new' space at the point where the north and south systems met. This was now occupied by a series of four parallel slots, perhaps horticultural in use, and large pit Group 780 (9391), into the top of which had been inserted up to four cremation burials. The presence of these features seems to reinforce the idea of a separation between the inner and outer areas of the settlement, but should not suggest that the northern reaches were unoccupied. Occupation activity still extended as far as the palaeochannel, as demonstrated by the spread of pits containing domestic refuse across Areas E, G and R, but activity may have been relatively sparse amid a zone that was perhaps predominantly paddocks.

The Southern Zone
As in the Northern Zone, the ditches bounding the plots to the south of Road/Track 3, established in the earlier 1st century, seem to have been short lived. Most of the ditches appear to have been infilled prior to any discernible Romanisation of the settlement's pottery assemblage. However, it is evident that the boundaries they established were perpetuated by other means throughout the early Roman period. In the eastern half of the zone, it is notable that these defunct ditches were not replaced by new delineating ditches nor were they encroached upon by the

otherwise ubiquitous early Roman pitting. It seems that, while the ditches themselves passed out of use, the land divisions remained, perhaps marked only by the low upcast banks and by the internal activities of the plots (*e.g.* gardens, buildings, *etc.*). However, it is perhaps more likely that their lines were perpetuated by hedges. The idea of these boundaries remaining static due to the presence of tangible, though archaeologically invisible barriers such as hedges would seem to be reinforced by the location of pits alongside them.

In Area M, two early Roman cremations 15017 and 15040 (Group 702) similarly lay close to one such boundary (Vol. 2, Section 2.4.1). While most of the founding ditches were singular, a few may have been paired, such as those between Open Areas 25 and 26, though one may simply have been a replacement of the other. It is perhaps apposite at this point to note the advice of the 1st-century-BC writer Columella:

> The most ancient authors preferred a living hedge to a constructed fence, because it not only called for less expense, but was more permanent and lasted for an indefinite time. The place which you intend to hedge…should be banked around with two ditches three feet apart. It is quite enough to make them two feet deep. We let them remain empty over the winter while the seeds are got ready to sow in them. (*Res rustica*, XI, iii, 3–5: quoted by Rackham 1986, 183–4)

Certainly, the use of hedges in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain can be reasonably assumed and has been suggested at the rural settlement at Farmoor, Oxfordshire (Lambrick and Robinson 1979, 121–2). Being a long-lived form of boundary, hedges may well have had the effect of stabilising land division for prolonged
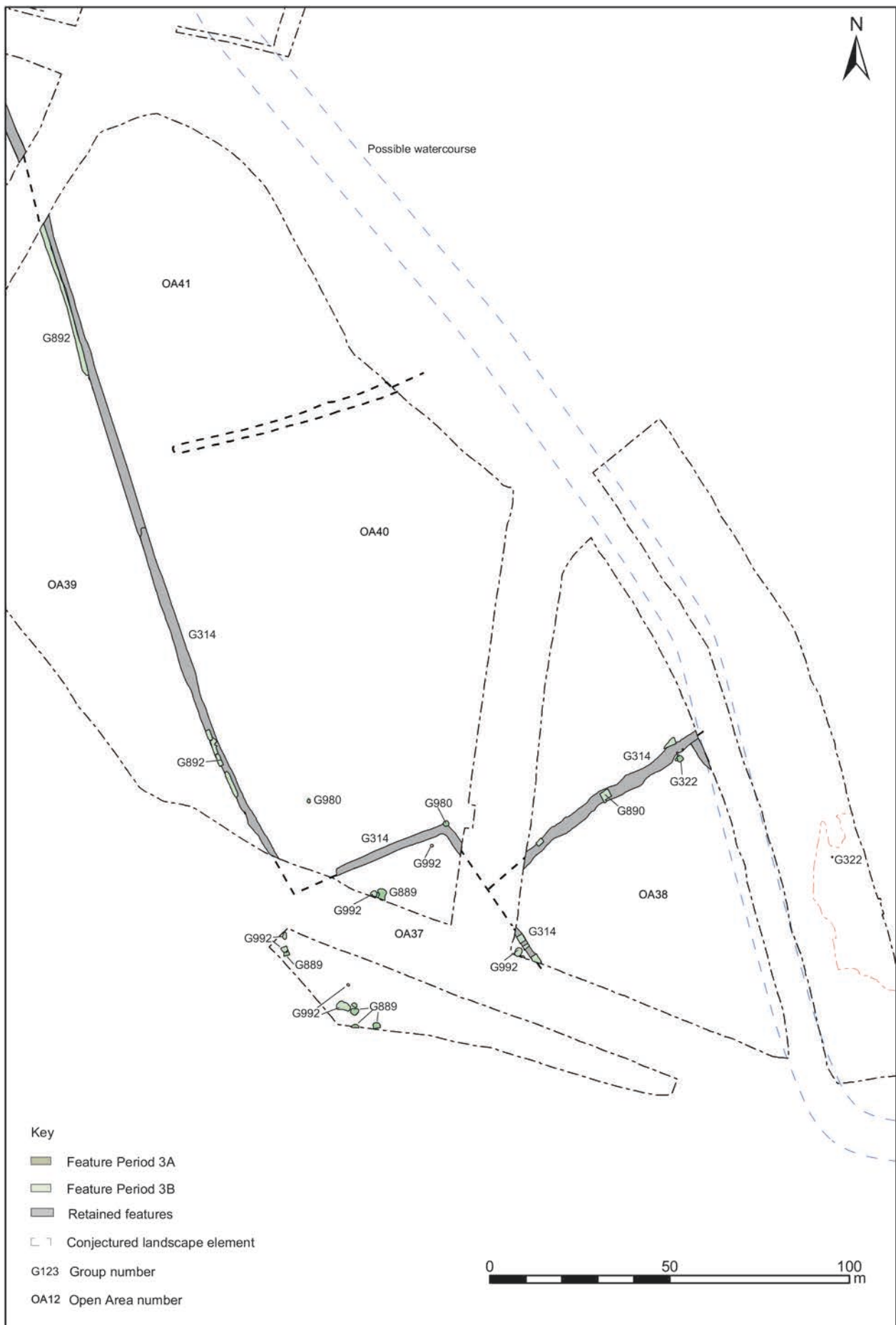
Figure 3.7 The early Roman settlement in the northern and eastern hinterland (Periods 3A and 3B)

periods of time, a phenomenon that is posited for the Southern Zone plots at Heybridge.

Within Open Areas 25 and 26, narrow foundation slots of early Roman date marked the positions of subdividing fences, which indicate that the occupation of the strip plots continued throughout the early Roman period with only minor adjustment to their interior arrangements (Vol. 2, Section 2.4.1). Other fragmentary remains of post- and slot-built structures (*e.g.* Structures 29–34) hint at further subdivision and activity within. Transitional-period strip Building 31 probably passed out of use during the late 1st century while strip Building 32 (Area P), and perhaps roundhouse Building 36 (Area L), stood into the 2nd century. New buildings were also constructed within these plots, with Building 39 being positioned at the Junction of Roads 2 and 3 in Open Area 28 (see Vol. 2, Detailed Text 3_24) and Buildings 40 and 41 in Area M. Judging by the content of the contemporary pits, metalworking activity in these plots was in general decline during the early Roman period, although the recovery of a complete iron bloom, probably associated with a pit (15573, Group 691), which contained a range of iron artefacts, shows that it was not entirely absent. However the character of these plots seems largely domestic, with hearths associated with Building 39 and two ovens or drying floors occupying a subdivision of the plot alongside. The presence of wells 4536 (Group 730) and 8989 (Group 662), the latter perhaps associated with 'wet-store' 8540 (Group 657), add weight to this view. The general domestic/agricultural character of these occupation plots is perhaps thus reminiscent of those at Godmanchester (Green 1975, 191).

Hinterland Zone
(Fig. 3.7)
While land use of the Northern Zone remained fairly constant between the transitional and early Roman periods, the watercourse that marked its northern extent underwent significant change around the mid 2nd century. Its north bank was built up by as much as a metre with a series of rubbish-rich gravels and silts. This is interpreted as an attempt to reclaim part of the shallow, wide, marshy channel and perhaps regularise its course or even strengthen its flow. This resulted in the creation of a strip of newly usable land between the watercourse and the terrace step. This far side of the stream was evidently still peripheral to the settlement; the small group of cremation burials in Area R represent the only subsequent early Roman activity there (ref. to Vol. 2).

In the hinterland proper of Area W (Fig. 3.7), the Late Iron Age field system continued in use throughout the early Roman period. Recutting of all the major boundaries attests to its active maintenance. At least initially, the Late Iron Age significance of these land divisions appears to have persisted, with occasional cremations continuing to be located in close proximity to ditches into the late 1st century. Significant change, in the late 2nd century AD, took the form of a series of modifications that continued on into the mid Roman period. The principal modification was the creation of the large gap in the major field boundary 25199 (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 3_45) at the very end of the early Roman period, which seems to have opened the way for further change in the next period.

V. The mid to late Roman settlement (Periods 4 and 5)

The first hints of significant changes in settlement structure, and perhaps function, became evident at the end of the 2nd century. The 3rd and 4th centuries appear to have seen a steady, if slow, decline in the vitality of the site, contraction of its area and presumably of its population. Changes are evident in other aspects, such as cereal processing.

Roads
(Figs 3.8 and 3.9)
Road 1 was clearly in use throughout the 3rd century and into the 4th. Along its northern exposed parts, through Areas F and G, maintenance was restricted to purely localised repair. In the south of Area F, more extensive mid Roman surfacing was apparent along with evidence of wear and rutting. It would seem that, as was already the case much earlier with Roads 3, 4 and 5, maintenance was now concentrated in and around the centre of the settlement. Here, fences along the roadsides in Areas H, I and J serve to show that the roads were still respected. Particular attention was paid to the south end of Road 1 where it had considerably subsided into earlier, pre-road features. Judging by the frequency of resurfacings, Road 4 may also be construed to have continued as an important thoroughfare. It was being repaired until into the 4th century, though by this time construction was poor in comparison with that of earlier periods. In contrast, Road 5 received only patchy repair into the 3rd century, by which time poorly graded and compacted dirty gravel was already being used, while Road 3 saw no new work at all.

Active maintenance of the road surfaces all but ceased by the late Roman period, although such features as roadside ditch Group 642 in the south of Open Area 18 and the ditches Group 539 and 564 in Open Area 59 suggest that the roads continued in use within the settlement centre (Vol. 2, Section 2.6.1). While maintenance decreased during the mid and into the late Roman periods, the accumulation of silt along the roadsides, washed off the surfaces themselves, rapidly increased. This material was identified in all the central areas of the settlement and, by the late Roman period, encroached upon the road surfaces themselves. The absence of such deposits from earlier periods must suggest more active attention was being paid to keeping the site clean. The implied deterioration in conditions in the later periods is evident in other ways too.

The Northern Zone
In essence, the basic infrastructure of the north part of the settlement remained static, with the major early Roman boundary ditches still exerting an influence even though partially infilled. Like the earlier plot boundaries of the southern outer zone, it seems that the boundary function of these features was largely replaced by hedges, but with the ditches themselves continuing to receive material in the tops of their partially infilled cuts, particularly at their southern ends, as late as the 4th century. The exception to this static layout was the renewal or reinforcement of the southern boundary of this system of land division. Late Roman ditch Group 834 in Open Area 47, along with fence Structure 42 and its late Roman replacement ditch Group 838 between Open Areas 18 and 32/47, reaffirmed this location as an important division within the settlement.
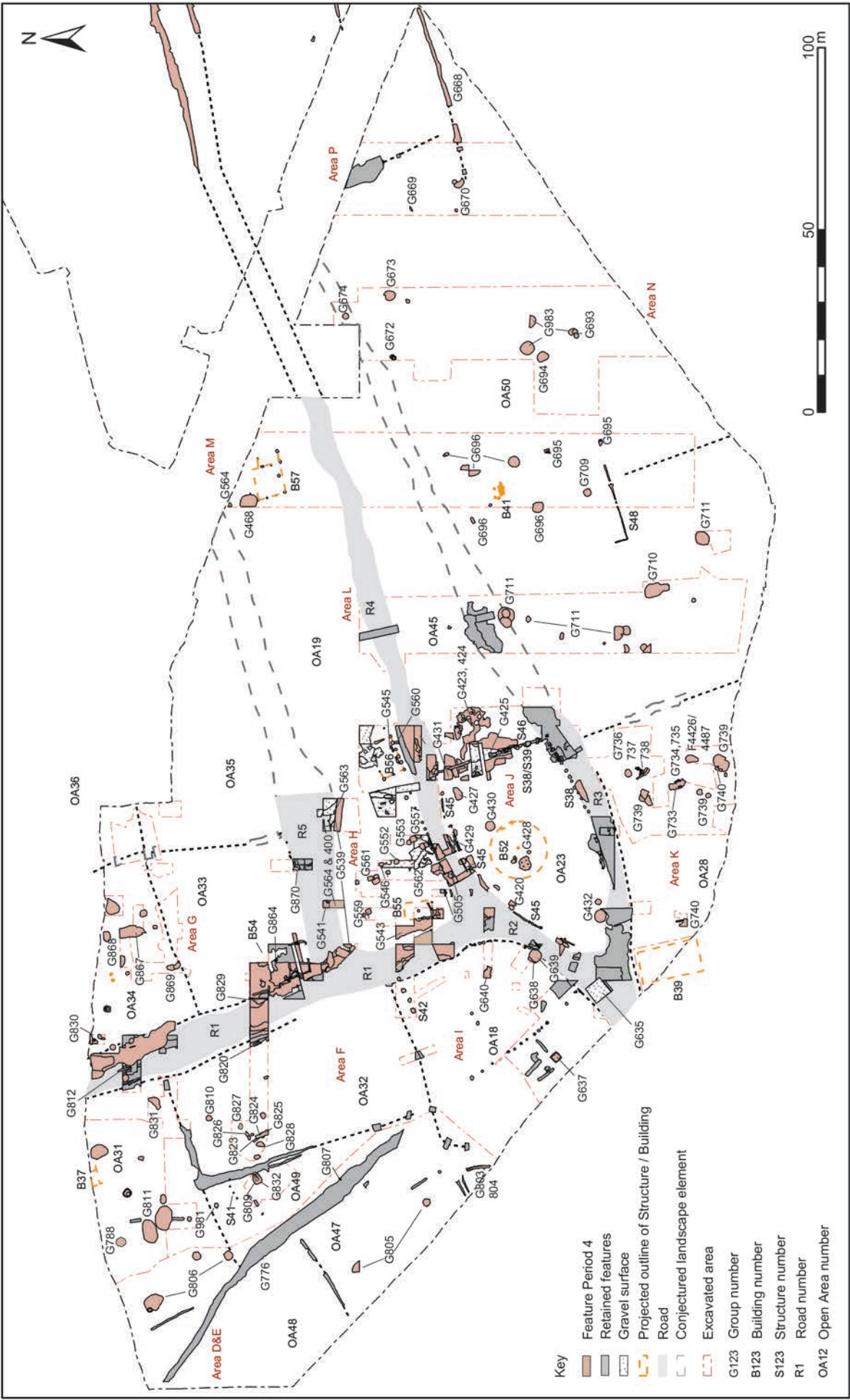
Figure 3.8 Mid Roman settlement on the lower terrace (Period 4)
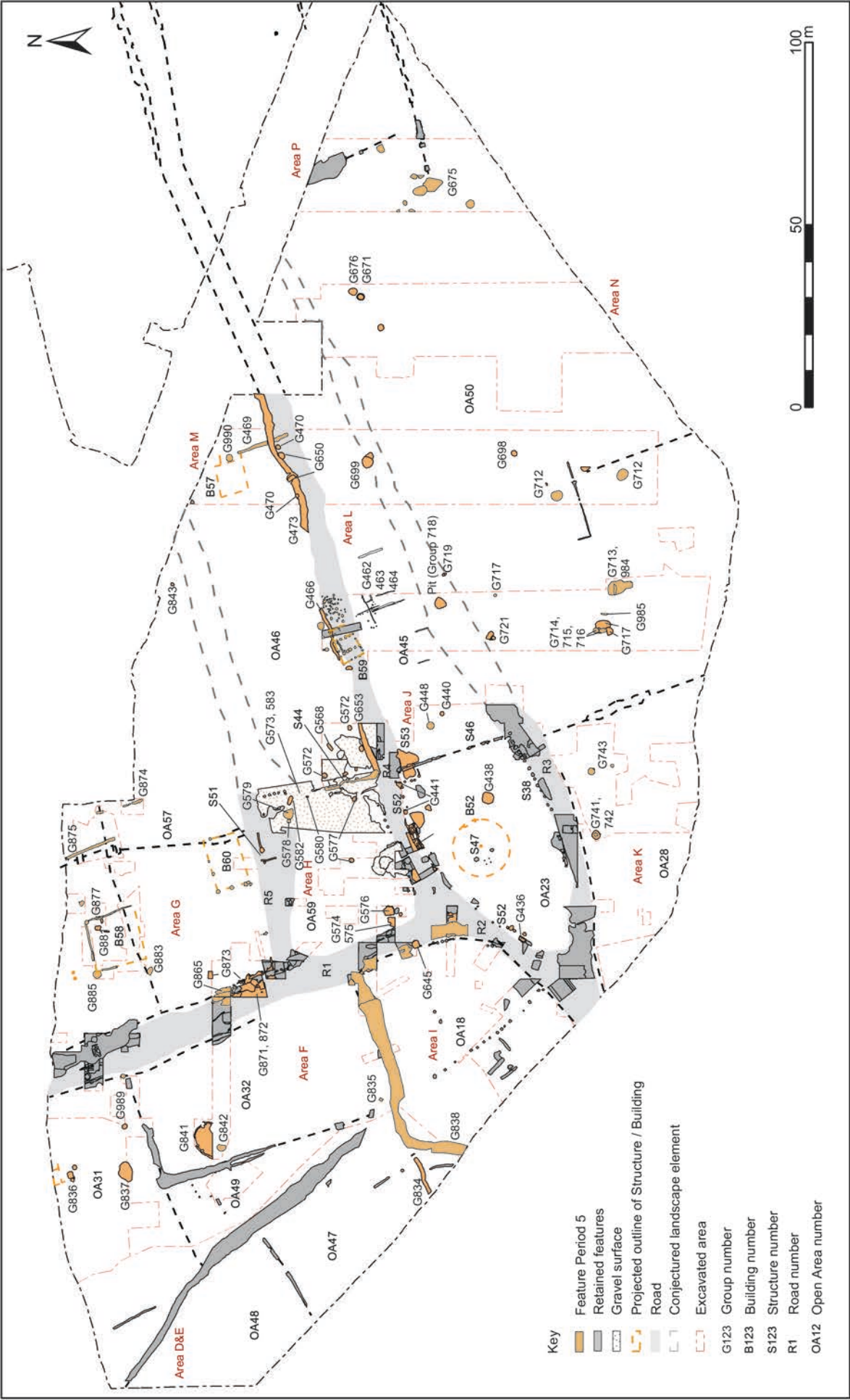
Figure 3.9 Late Roman settlement on the lower terrace (Period 5)

Occupation in the Northern Zone of the settlement appears to have been sparse. Pitting became progressively less intense, and crop remains, in particular, were much less abundant in the few pits that were dug. In Area F, northern and southern pits displayed differential deposition and thus perhaps function, with those nearer the settlement core containing larger and more varied assemblages. This may hint at the southward contraction of domestic occupation. Certainly, the early Roman buildings and wells in this part of the settlement had passed out of use and the incidence of occasional burials such as casual inhumation Group 809 in Open Area 49 (Vol. 2, Section 2.5.1) may well support this view. The relative lack of pits in this vicinity may, at least in part, have been due to a change in disposal practices. The incidence of midden deposits Group 841 in Open Area 32 (Fig. 3.9) would appear to support this. However, this may be misleading, as middening was probably always a common feature of the site, and it may be only the survival and recognition of such a feature that is noteworthy.

However, this is not to say that occupation ceased altogether. On the contrary, new building activity is well attested in this period. In Open Area 33, Building 54 was constructed at the junction of Roads 1 and 5. Its foundation slots had been packed with burnt daub, presumably derived from an earlier building destroyed by fire. After undergoing various alterations, it too burnt down; a number of *in situ* charred post stumps were found amongst the foundation slot packing. Its site was subsequently levelled and a new structure, Building 58, constructed in a more central plot position.

The Central Zone
(Pl. 3.7)
The open nature of the three central plots persisted throughout the mid and late Roman periods with boundaries remaining static and if anything, a gradual loss of all but the most essential features occupying their interiors.

Surfacing of their interiors was by now patchy. In Open Area 18 resurfacing was confined to the vicinity of the monumental post. In Open Area 19, it was limited to repairs of existing occupation surfaces, notably incorporating significant amounts of animal bone as well as gravel (Fig. 3.8).

In Open Area 18, the division of the plot between likely domestic occupation and public/communal use continued. The communal area was dominated by the monumental post 13331 (Group 637, Fig. 3.8) until its removal in the early to mid 3rd century, although the latrine trench had already passed out of use. The disappearance of this major feature and the almost complete lack of new features emphasise the continuing function of part of the plot as an open area. Similarly, during the mid Roman period Open Area 19 lost its central feature, well 6280 (Group 531, Period 3), in the late 2nd or early 3rd century. In its place were clusters of small rectangular pits (Vol. 2, Section 2.5.1). The addition of two possible rectilinear buildings, Building 55, which fronted on to Road 1, and Building 56, which faced Road 4, as well as the square structure Building 57 at the eastern end of Open Area 19, suggests a change in its function (Fig. 3.8). In the late Roman period these buildings or structures had gone and the area was subdivided (Fig. 3.9) into two Open Areas (59 and 46) by the creation of wall

Structure 44 (Group 567). This possibly monumental wall was aligned on the adjacent temple precinct wall (S46) and extends between the remains of Roads 4 and 5. In Open Area 59 homogenous silts accumulated across the whole of the plot interior, as far east as the remains of the later Roman wall, Structure 44.

Of the three central plots, the content of Open Area 23 was the most static (Fig. 6.6). The temple continued to be the only major structure occupying the precinct, the only changes made to it concerning its internal arrangements with the insertion of a new shrine, Structure 47 (Fig. 6.6 and Vol. 2, Section 2.5.1). This comprised a rectangular post-built structure (1.4×1.2m) which directly overlay the plinth remains. To either side was a shallow tile and rubble-filled post-pad, which may have supported some form of a canopy. Two monumental posts were also erected, one inside (Group 427), and the other outside the precinct (Group 440). A new, probably more imposing precinct wall, with a rubble footing (Structure 46, Pl. 3.6), replaced the earlier fence-like boundary (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 4_07). Within the precinct, the location of pitting again moved from adjacent to the temple doorway to the northern periphery in the mid Roman period. These pits encroached upon the ditch and fence-lines that had formerly constituted the *temenos* boundary. However, the evidently ritual nature of many of the artefacts recovered from their fills (Chapter 6) suggests that this activity did not represent the intrusion into, or denigration of the sanctity of the temple precinct. Similar deposition was noted within the mid 3rd-century backfilling of pit 5394 (Group 432) on the south side of the precinct. Outside the precinct doorway, alongside monumental post 21801 (Group 440), partially infilled well 22210 (Group 448) acted as a ritual pool into which votive items were cast (Fig. 3.9 and Chapter 6).

With the removal of the two monumental posts sometime around the mid 4th century, the temple stood in isolation within its enclosure. However, continuing structured deposition along the northern periphery demonstrates that its religious function continued. The precinct remained a recognisable entity until the end of the late Roman period when, following failed attempts to arrest the subsidence of the precinct wall, it was eventually demolished in the mid to late 4th century.

Although there was an apparent general loss of occupation features across the central settlement plots, and no sign of any new ones replacing them in the late Roman period, it seems that the land units themselves nevertheless survived. Although in a poor state, the roads can be presumed to have continued at least to mark their boundaries, if not to function as thoroughfares. The eastern perimeter of the Open Area 19 plot was formalised as late as the early 4th century by the construction of a wooden fence or wall, Structure 44 (Fig. 3.9; Vol. 2, Detailed Text 5_08). This appears to have been closely associated with the temple precinct wall, of which it probably formed a northward extension. Homogenous dark silts accumulated across the whole of the interior of Area H, coinciding with a decline in the number of occupation features present. Although this may represent a decline or change in its use, even constituting a 'dark earth', Area H had a continued association with the adjacent temple; large pit 6641 contained a number of pewter vessels and a decapitated horse (Vol. 2, Section 2.6.1), which surely constitutes structured deposition (Chapter 6, Pl. 3.7).

Plate 3.7 Pewter vessels from the structured deposit in pit 6641

Around the mid 4th century, the 'open space' to the east of Areas J and H (Open Areas 45 and 46), at last succumbed to the encroachment of occupation activity (Fig. 3.9). Both Road 4 and the gravelled surfaces to either side were cut by a proliferation of structural features such as post-holes and slots. Building 59 (Fig. 3.9) was built directly upon Road 4 and a range of similarly aligned slots to its south probably constitute associated fenced enclosures and other structures. Strangely, this incursion of features into the 'open space' did not include pitting, other than a small number directly north of Building 59 and no doubt associated with its occupation. The proliferation of other small features across the unexcavated parts of the area between Roads 3 and 5 are likely to represent a further and more widespread manifestation of this late Roman encroachment into the 'open space'. It is suspected, though not demonstrated by excavation, that the metalled surfaces of the 'open space' had probably been largely buried under accumulated soil and turf by this time.

The Southern Zone
(Pl. 3.8)
Although it is difficult to determine the precise nature of later Roman land use within the Southern Zone it is apparent that much of this part of the settlement retained its existing patterning and use at least into the 3rd century, and probably beyond. The Southern Zone plots probably survived more or less intact. Within Area M mid Roman pits continued to be located alongside the original boundary ditches even though by this time they were long defunct. This fact adds further weight to the authors' opinion that the layout of these plots was perpetuated by hedge lines.

In Area K, Building 39 (Fig. 3.8) survived and pitting and processing activities were undertaken to its east. Some of the early Roman pits of this zone seem to have continued to accumulate material as late as the 3rd century while others were recut and reused. In comparison with previous periods, the density of pitting was in decline across all the excavated areas in this zone of the settlement. It is uncertain whether or not this attests to depopulation, change of function or simply a change in disposal practices. However, well 14984 (Group 710), in Area L, and a number of ovens, crop-drying floors and pottery kilns scattered across the plots, indicate that activity was diverse during this period, although, other than Building 39, contemporary structures and buildings have not been identified. It is postulated that domestic buildings were of purely earth-fast post construction and that the restricted nature of excavation, lack of dating evidence and poor visibility of spatial patterning has made their recognition extremely difficult.

It could be suggested that the increased appearance of kilns and crop-drying floors (Pl. 3.8), hitherto a feature of marginal settlement locations, together with a decrease in structures and pits, represent a westward contraction and the increasing ruralisation of these eastern parts.

The decrease in both range and quantity of features continued into the late Roman period, with activity mainly represented by the presence of a few pits in each of the excavated areas. No further buildings were recognised across the Southern Zone and well 14984 (Group 710) passed out of use and was backfilled with an apparent closure deposit comprising dog, pig and cow carcasses (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 5_12) by the mid 4th century. The continued occurrence of such features as hearth 4378 in Area K and pottery kiln 14858 in Area L may add weight to the view of westward settlement contraction; these
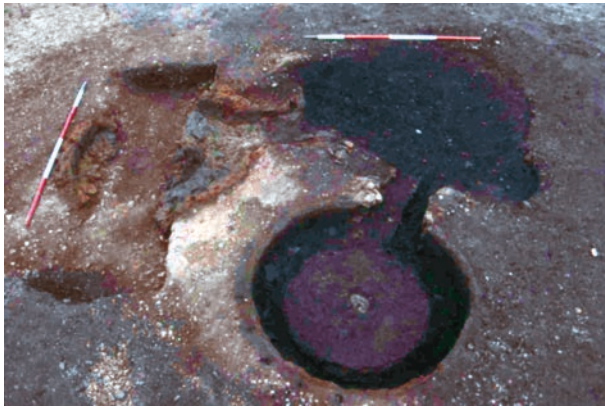
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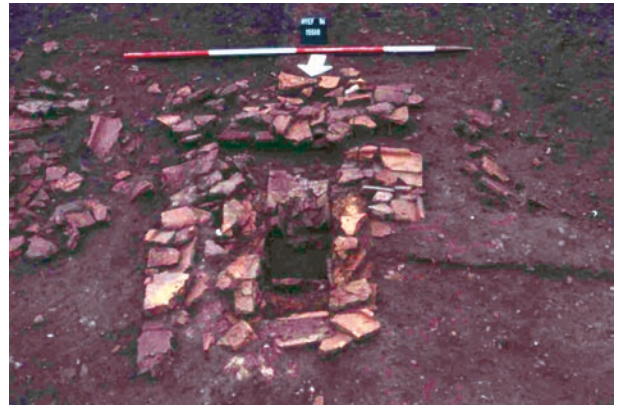
d

b

c

Plate 3.8 Examples of kilns and dryers from Periods 4 and 5: a) kilns 1618 and 1223, b) kiln 10906 (Group 10854), c) kiln 11423 (Group 11572), d) hearth 15638

areas were used only for specific processing and manufacturing activities, rather than being residential. However, the appearance of buildings and associated structures in the 'open space' immediately to the north hints that this interpretation may be too simplistic.

Hinterland Zone
(Fig. 3.10, Pl. 3.9)
The water channel, though silted up during the 3rd century, remained an important topographic and boundary feature. Further reclamation of the north side of its course was undertaken during the 3rd century, with deposits of gravelly silt and building rubble dumped alongside and over a group of earlier Roman cremation burials. The land surface appears to have been reconstituted following this episode and the area subsequently used for low-level pitting, although a single north–south ditch Group 968 may indicate that the north bank was now subdivided into plots that ran towards or away from the watercourse. More significantly, wood-lined ditch 25271 (Group 969, Pl. 3.9) may have been the remains of a leat that cut across a bend in the watercourse. While these ditches remained in use into the 4th century, the channel itself had more-or-less silted up and was probably little more than a seasonally

Plate 3.9 Excavation of the wood-lined ditch 25271
(Group 969)

flowing stream. Environmental remains recovered from dumps into the channel strongly suggest that malting and brewing took place in the vicinity (Vol. 2, Section 4.7.2) presumably taking advantage of the water supply.

Further north (Fig. 3.10), more modifications were made to the field system following those initial changes at the end of the early Roman period. A small, rectilinear enclosure (25104 and associated features, Group 895) was inserted into a corner of the field system. Some 55×45m, and with a funnel-like entrance at its south-east corner, it is postulated that this was probably used as a stock enclosure or paddock and so may indicate a greater degree of diversification away from the traditional cereal cultivation in the mid to late Roman periods. Drying floors 3042 (Group 916/927) and 2647 (Group 929/930) were constructed to either side of the wide gap in ditch 25199 (Group 896) and a pair of pottery kilns were sited in the area of 'no man's land' between the field system and terrace edge (Groups 906 and 908, see Vol. 2, Detailed Text 4_18). This seems to parallel the presence of similar structures across the Southern Zone in this period. However, the charred plant remains indicate a marked change in the organisation of cereal processing centred on the drying floors. These peripheral sites were used for bulk processing to serve the community as a whole,

whereas in earlier periods there was much more domestic control of cereal cleaning. In contrast, the contemporary structures in the Southern Zone apparently saw much less intensive use (Vol. 2, Section 4.7.1).

Parallel developments in the agricultural landscape may be perceived to occur at other rural sites in the Blackwater valley, such as at Chigborough Farm with the creation of more and smaller fields and a postulated increase in arable farming (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 105). Landscape redevelopment from the late 2nd century onwards is known to be a widespread phenomenon and the implications of this to the settlement economy at Heybridge is discussed in Chapter 4. The field system passed out of use by the end of the mid Roman period with no evidence of later Roman activity being recognised across Area W.

Settlement extent, shape and population
Despite a decrease in the number of pits and a lack of tangible buildings, the settlement extent of the 3rd and 4th centuries probably did not contract significantly. More probably, the intensity of occupation diminished and the various associated manufacturing and processing activities became dispersed across the lower terrace. The only place that lacked convincing evidence of occupation was Area Q, always on the eastern edge of the settlement, though it should be borne in mind that we are ignorant of the content of Area A3. Thus, superficially, Heybridge retained its earlier shape and extent. However, it is suspected that occupation alongside Road 1, to the north of its presumed crossing of the palaeochannel, may have intensified during the course of the 3rd and 4th centuries. Evidence from the Langford Road excavation (Langton and Holbrook 1997) indicates that occupation extended northward for at least 350m. However, only the rear of the plots at Langford Road and Crescent Road were excavated so the same cautionary notes regarding the nature and density of occupation apply here.

What is perhaps more pertinent than calculation of surface extent of the distribution settlement features is the estimation of the later Roman population size. However, such an estimate is impossible to make since our knowledge of potential households is limited to only half a dozen recognised buildings, and the nature of later Roman occupation and activity to the west of the Elms Farm site is unknown. What may be postulated is the inward contraction of the intensity of activity, presumably toward the religious focus, but not precluding the possibility of other kinds of foci to its west. Given the likely scattered distribution of occupation activity across the Northern and Southern Zones, the core of the settlement may have been delimited by ditch 25027 (Group 838), which seems to have marked the northern extent of the core settlement by the 4th century.

It is perhaps possible to postulate that its religious function had become dominant, perhaps even its *raison d'être*, and that to all intents and purposes Heybridge had become a rural shrine. There are clear signs in the presence of votive deposits in ditch 25027 (Group 838) and pit 6641(Group 579) that religious or ritual activity had extended into Open Areas 18 and 19 by the later 4th century.
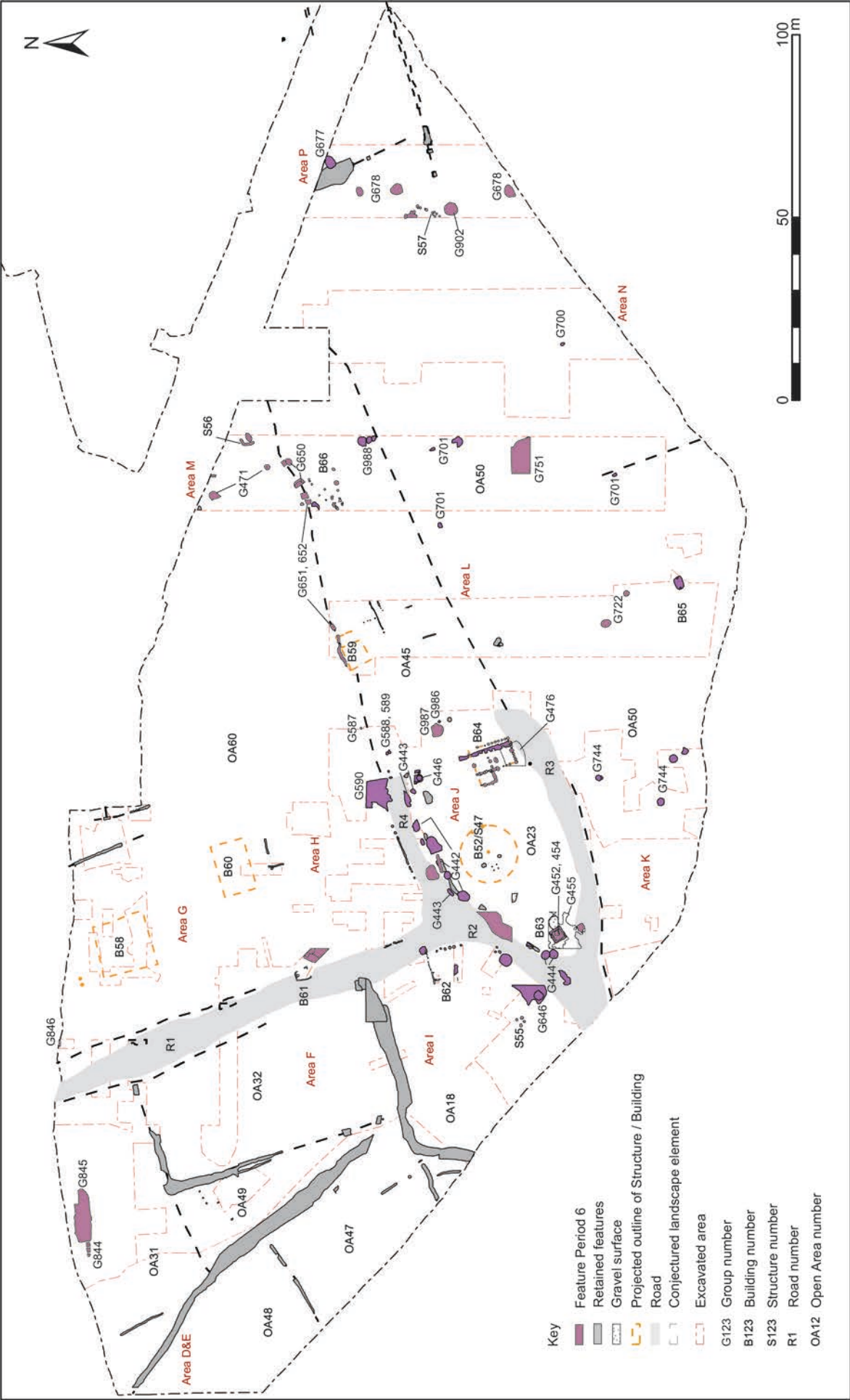
Figure 3.10 Mid Roman settlement on the upper terrace (Period 4)
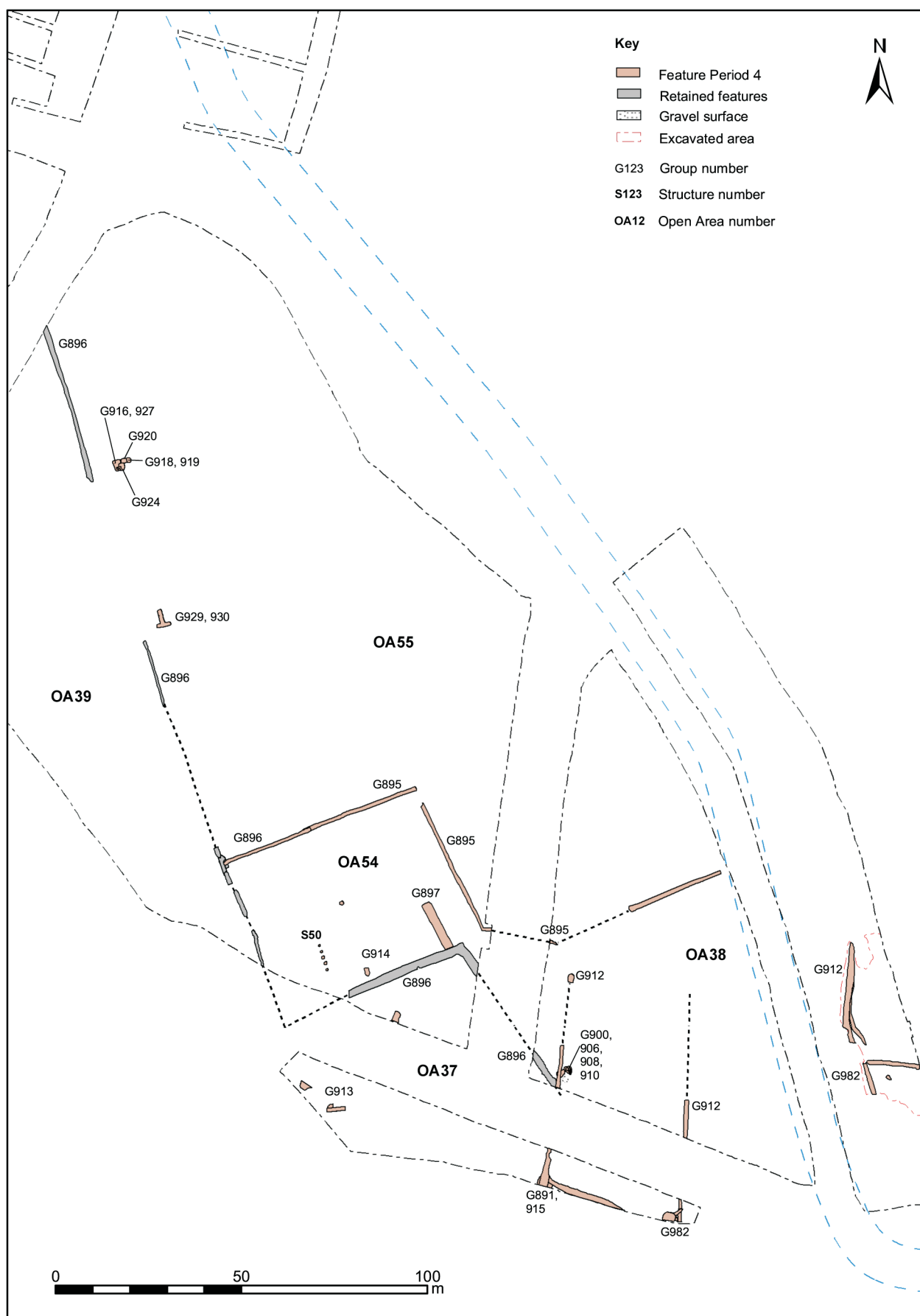
Figure 3.11 Latest Roman and early Saxon settlement (Period 6)

55

VI. The latest Roman to early Saxon settlement (Period 6)
(Fig. 3.11)

Where present, evidence of continued occupation as late as the end of the 4th century and beyond was extremely sparse across the investigated area of the Roman settlement (Figs 2.8 and 3.11). While the majority of features identified were *latest* Roman rather than early Saxon, the occasional buildings, scattered pits and a single ditch are difficult to interpret as anything other than scattered occupation activity. It is possible that the abandonment of the settlement proper was a late 4th century event and that the early Saxon activity represented a subsequent *re-occupation* (*contra* Drury and Wickenden 1982). The occurrence of sunken-featured buildings only on the northern and southern peripheries of the earlier settlement may suggest that the old settlement focus, particularly the religious focus, was actively avoided. However, this was perhaps as much due to topographical considerations with the edges of both the upper and lower terraces preferred for occupation in this period.

While there were limited links with the earlier settlement, with some alignment upon and occasional reuse of later Roman features, it seems that the infrastructure of roads and major boundaries that had dominated the layout for so long had finally disappeared. Saxon occupation, at least on the lower terrace (Fig. 3.11), was short-lived, with no more than a single phase of buildings identified. Following what was perhaps only a single generation of activity, this vicinity was abandoned. The post-abandonment land-use is discussed in Chapter 8.

Roads
Although the roads had long since ceased to be maintained, at least some of their lines continued to exert an influence in the very centre of the late 4th century settlement. In Area H, the vestiges of Road 4 were flanked by ditch 25260 (Groups 466, 473, 584). It seems unlikely that the road survived as a thoroughfare, but instead perhaps marked a boundary, reinforced with shallow ditches.

Late 4th-century pits and buildings, such as Building 62, encroached upon the road edges. If not actually disused, Road 1 was narrower than before. Further north, at its junction with Road 5, Road 1 was occupied by a small building (Building 61), showing that further from the old centre of settlement active road use was now impossible. It is not clear if this was a late 4th- or 5th-century development. Evidence from Area I suggests that Roads 1 and 2 were virtually buried beneath silt accumulations in the late 4th century with similar material identified on Road 4 in Area J.

Northern Zone
Final Roman activity in the Northern Zone was sparse. In Open Area 60, Building 58 may have survived to the end of the 4th century, along with a few boundary features such as ditch 25111 (Group 875). Single pits and the strange, uninterpreted 'trench' 25212 (Group 845) attest to some level of activity elsewhere across this zone. No features of demonstrably early Saxon date were identified, although the two square cuts 8142 and 8155 (Group 836), containing part-articulated human remains, could conceivably be this late (Chapter 6). In addition, Building 61, constructed on the junction of former Roads 1 and 5, is likely to be early Saxon.

Plate 3.10 The late 4th-century Building 63

Central Zone
(Pl. 3.10)
The trend of decline in intensity of latest Roman occupation was evident within Open Areas 18 and 60, but not in the temple area (Open Area 23).

In Open Area 18 occupation was hinted at by partial structural remains in the form of four-post Structure 55 and probable Building 62 (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 6_06), the latter itself encroaching upon Road 1. However, the large mid and late Roman features, such as well 5806 and pits 13138 and 13358, continued to accumulate pottery in their slump hollows (Group 649) up to the end of the 4th century and may hint at a more casual use of Open Area 18.

Of the three central plots, what remained of the temple precinct contained the most convincing evidence of late 4th-century occupation (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 6_02). The circular temple still occupied the centre of this plot, although its state by this time cannot be determined. To its east, the precinct wall had collapsed and been demolished, its foundations partially robbed out. Indeed, it is unlikely that any of the ditches and fences that formerly enclosed the precinct still stood. Two new buildings were constructed in the sacred area. Building 63 was a small, square structure (Pl. 3.10) that may have been associated with lead casting, located at the junction of Roads 2 and 3. Building 64, a substantial timber building with a tessellated floor, was constructed over the line of the former precinct wall (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 6_03).

Although the loss of boundaries and appearance of these buildings might suggest that a fundamental change had taken place, it seems that votive deposition persisted along the northern fringes of the former precinct until the end of the Roman period. Also, the temple was clearly still respected by this late activity; Building 64 was located so as not to block direct access to the temple entrance. Indeed, a religious function for this structure is considered elsewhere (Chapter 6). Whether the temple survived as a maintained and functioning building or as a revered ruin is not clear, though 'well' 22210, to the east of the former precinct wall, seems to have acquired a secondary use as a votive pool or 'wishing well' (Group 687) judging by the quantity of late coinage and shale bracelets in its top fills. Numerous 'scoop-like' cuts in the same vicinity may represent further depositional activity, some of which contained further coins and jewellery. Similarly, ditch 25027 (Group 834) continued to accumulate material of votive character in its top and may have continued to function as a boundary related to the final use of the temple. However, this activity apparently ceased prior to the early Saxon period and, significantly, there is no evidence of structures or deposits of this date within Open Area 23.

The east end of the 'open space' (in the far north of Area M) contained a few Saxon pits and the foundation slot 15688 of Structure 56, which contained a complete pot (Vol. 2, Section 3.3). In this same vicinity, some late Roman pits and ditch 25078 contained further early Saxon material in settling fills in their tops. This perhaps hints at more extensive activity that has left little tangible trace.

The absence of early Saxon structures in the Central Zone, and occurrence only of contemporary pitting in the very east of the 'open space', suggests that the basic layout of the former Roman settlement was still apparent. It is possible that its core, particularly its religious locus, was actively avoided as a place of occupation. Perhaps the roads and the remnants of the temple remained as markers in the terrace landscape some considerable time into the 5th century.

Southern Zone
Latest Roman activity within the south part of the settlement was restricted only to a scatter of single, apparently isolated pits and material accumulated in the settling hollows of earlier pits. It is perhaps unlikely that the plot boundaries survived by this time. However, a low level of occupation persisted into the 5th century, at least some of which appears to have been focused upon and perhaps even reused Roman settlement features. In Open Area 50 a sunken-floored building (Building 65) was located in close proximity to late Roman well 14984, into which early Saxon pit 14529 (Group 722) had been cut. Otherwise, evidence of this latest activity was restricted to a single pit and cluster of post-holes in Area P. The marked lack of activity in what was once one of the most densely occupied areas of the settlement would seem to be significant.

Hinterland Zone
(Pl. 3.11)
Whether the landscape of the upper terrace can be regarded as an actively farmed and managed hinterland by the end of the 4th century is debatable, particularly given that the nucleated settlement with which it was associated had ceased to exist and its population seemingly dispersed or removed elsewhere. However, the presence of late 4th-century ceramics in the ditches of various enclosures and boundaries at least indicates some depositional activity as they passed out of use.

Drury's 1972 excavation showed that the southern edge of the terrace was a focus of early Saxon occupation (Drury and Wickenden 1982). At Elms Farm, two sunken-featured buildings (Buildings 67 and 68, Pl. 3.11) occupied the north bank of the watercourse in Area R (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 6_10), only some 30–40m to the south-west of the similar structures at Crescent Road. It is likely that adjacent Period 4 wood-lined ditch 25271 (Group 696) also continued to function up to the end of the 4th century, at least, and was finally filled as part of this early Saxon occupation.

A further sunken-featured building (Building 69) was located in the south-east of Area W (Vol. 2, Detailed Text 6_11). It may have occupied the remnants of a late Roman enclosure.

Settlement extent, shape and population
In view of the paucity of early Saxon occupation across the area of the former Roman settlement, it may be construed that the 5th century saw a general shift, northwards, onto the higher terrace. Judging by the collective evidence of the Elms Farm and Crescent Road excavations, the course of the palaeochannel may well mark the westward and southward spread of Saxon occupation. Although a few early Saxon features were found at Langford Road (Langton and Holbrook 1997, 29), no buildings were encountered. On the basis of current evidence, a linear concentration of occupation activity can be postulated to have extended at least 200m along the upper terrace edge. Although its northward extent has been lost to modern development along Crescent Road, it is clear that there was sporadic outlying activity, probably in all directions, to some distance.

The identification, to date, of a collective total of ten, possibly eleven, early Saxon buildings should be compared to the postulated number of Roman structures (*e.g.* an estimated twenty-two early Roman dwellings). Particularly given that the Crescent Road and Area W sunken-featured buildings are some 200m apart, it is not unreasonable to estimate an actual total of twenty or more. Despite the small size of these latest structures (and admitted uncertainty as to their functioning as houses), it seems possible that the population of 5th-century Heybridge need not have been significantly less than in preceding periods. Such a possibility should also alert us to the fact that a decrease in material culture and in the number of attributable features (*e.g.* pits and ditches) evident may be a product of change and settlement shift rather than depopulation and abandonment.
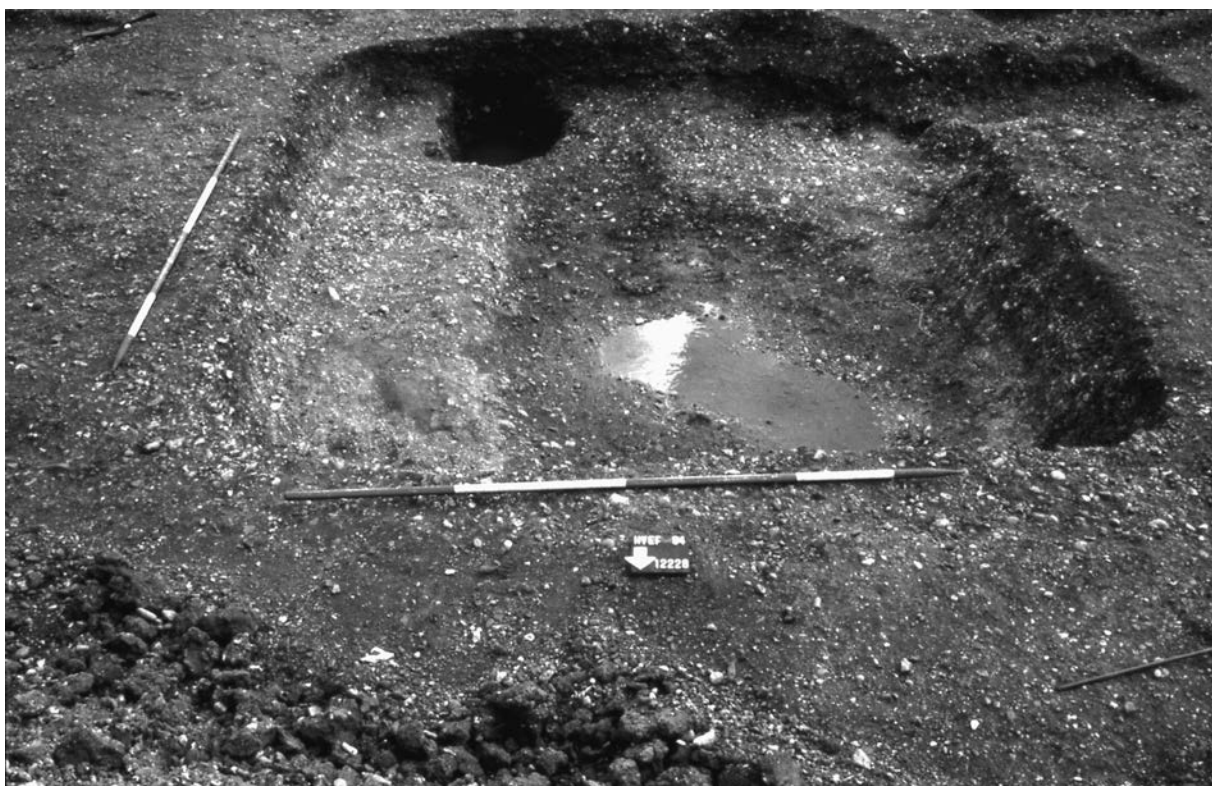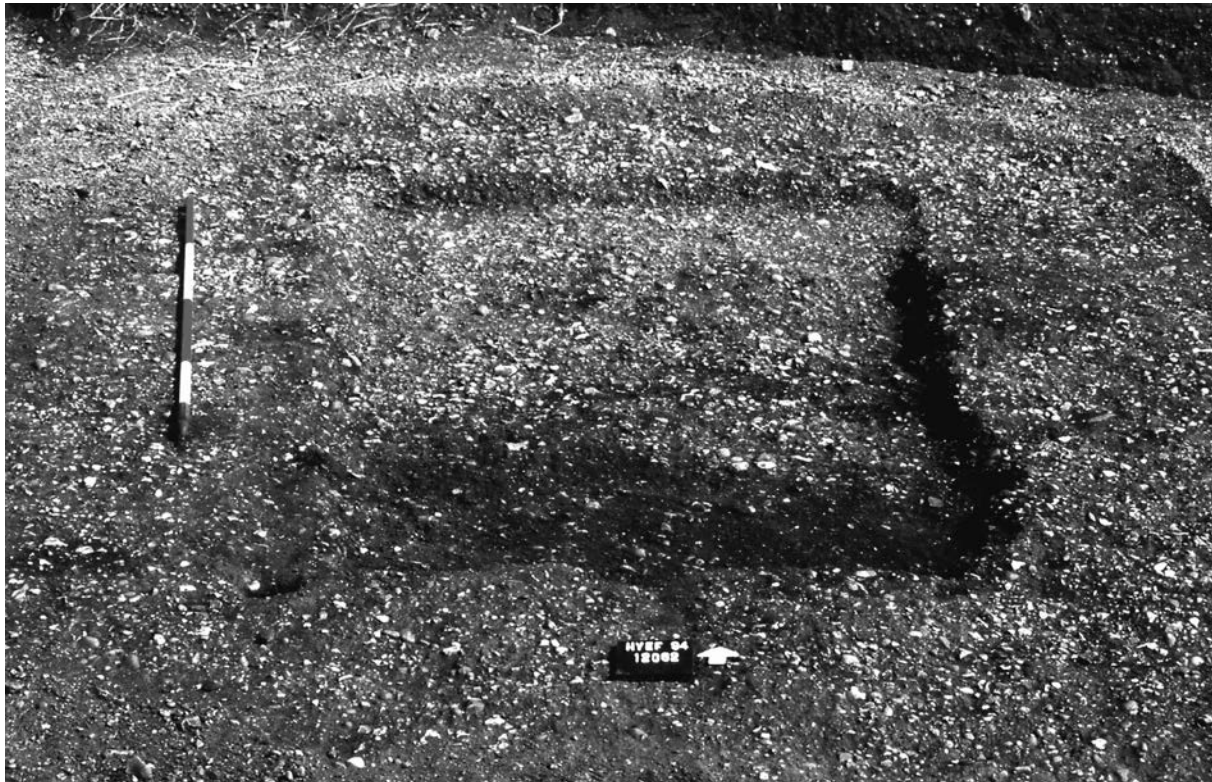

Plate 3.11 Sunken-floored buildings 67 (above) and 68 (below)

Chapter 4. Settlement Status and Economy

I. Status

Introduction
(Fig. 4.1)

The settlement at Heybridge clearly had an importance that developed, changed in emphasis, and ultimately waned over the approximate 500-year span of its existence. However, the true nature and level of its importance, and its sphere of influence, are more difficult to determine (Fig. 4.1). Based on chance finds accumulated over the course of a century of unfocussed work, Heybridge had, prior to the Elms Farm excavation, passed into the literature as a 'small town' and port (Hawkes and Hull 1947, 19; Drury and Rodwell 1980, 64; Buckley and Hedges 1987, 44; Wickenden 1986, 62 and 1996, 77). While the identification of Heybridge as a town was not unreasonable in view of Drury's Crescent Road discoveries, particularly against the backdrop of earlier discoveries (Wickenden 1986), the attribution of a port function is something of a myth. The latter seems to have grown out of Fitch's report of the character of the artefactual assemblage recovered from Langford Junction in 1887, although no such direct assertion seems to have been made by him (Fitch 1905). Heybridge's port function is thus an often-cited 'fact' that is clearly overdue for reassessment; although it is noted that C.R. Wallace (1998) has been the first to question this in his consideration of Late Iron Age and Roman imported pottery in the lower Blackwater valley.

The far more extensive excavations undertaken at Elms Farm have, inevitably, produced a larger and more representative sample of the settlement morphology, providing both detail and the general overview in which to place it. Wickenden's discussion of Heybridge's status and function, and of some of the detail of its internal layout, can now revised (Wickenden 1986, 61–5); the key areas are addressed in the discussion that follows.

Simply defining Heybridge as a Roman 'small town' overlooks the fundamental importance of the Late Iron Age foundation of the settlement. Furthermore, determining the status of the Late Iron Age settlement is much harder than for the Roman period. While the excavation of the site has produced a body of evidence that may inform on such aspects as morphology, wealth, trade and communication, unlike the Roman period, there has been relatively little academic debate regarding classification on grounds of perceived status and function against which to compare it. The distinction between types of site does not appear to have progressed beyond a simple dichotomy: farmstead or oppidum. However, this is not perhaps as problematical as it first appears. The development of the Romanised settlement actually began prior to the conquest, so that much of the Late Iron Age evidence can be meaningfully discussed with reference to the criteria already established during debates on the nature of Roman towns since the 1970s (*e.g.* Todd 1970; Rodwell and Rowley 1975; Burnham and Wacher 1990; Millett 1990; Burnham 1995).

The *characterisation* of immediately pre-conquest and Roman Heybridge can be undertaken against the background of the 'small towns' debate and with reference to many cited examples. However, it is clear from the detailed evidence now available to us, that past attempts to ascertain the function and status of a settlement have been very general and far more simplistic than the reality, having drawn upon a very limited corpus of evidence. Measured against the various criteria of the 'small towns' debate and compared to other settlements so defined, it is apparent that various parts of Heybridge possessed town-like attributes at various times in its existence. Thus to assess its status is, in many ways, to chart the development, use and prosperity of its different functional areas.

Late Iron Age

The Late Iron Age settlement (Period 2A), though little understood from the fragmentary remains excavated, clearly had a significance prior to its Late Iron–early Roman transition period (Period 2B) *floruit*, as previously acknowledged by Wickenden (1986, 61). However, in the absence of an intelligible picture of settlement morphology during the 1st century BC it is difficult to understand its function and hence the nature of its importance.

Morphology
(Table 4.1)

From the later 1st century BC onwards, Heybridge probably developed as a loosely-nucleated settlement, comprising fields and enclosures, some of which were occupied by dwellings. This does not appear to have been merely an agglomeration of separate farmsteads, but a community comprising 'private' and 'public', or communal, areas and *facilities*. It is evident that these shared areas hint at the relatively developed degree of social cohesion and communality, with the most obvious being a religious focus. At least two buildings with a religious focus have been identified (Buildings 7 and 8, Area J) and, in the limited language of identification and interpretation available to us, have been labelled 'shrines'. The importance, and indeed the recognition, of this location and its buildings as a sacred place has been inferred from the fact of its subsequent development into a Roman temple complex, elements of which clearly mirrored the positioning of these original buildings. While the presence of a larger religious complex has been suggested, with the tentative inclusion of the enigmatic angled ditch 25252 in Area H, it is not necessarily the case that this original focus was either extensive or particularly important, or that it even occupied a central place in the early settlement layout. Indeed, it is likely that the presence of one or a number of shrines of varying importance was commonplace within many (if not all) Late Iron Age settlements (Table 4.1).

Thus, it may perhaps be concluded that the presence or absence of shrines is not always a reliable indicator of
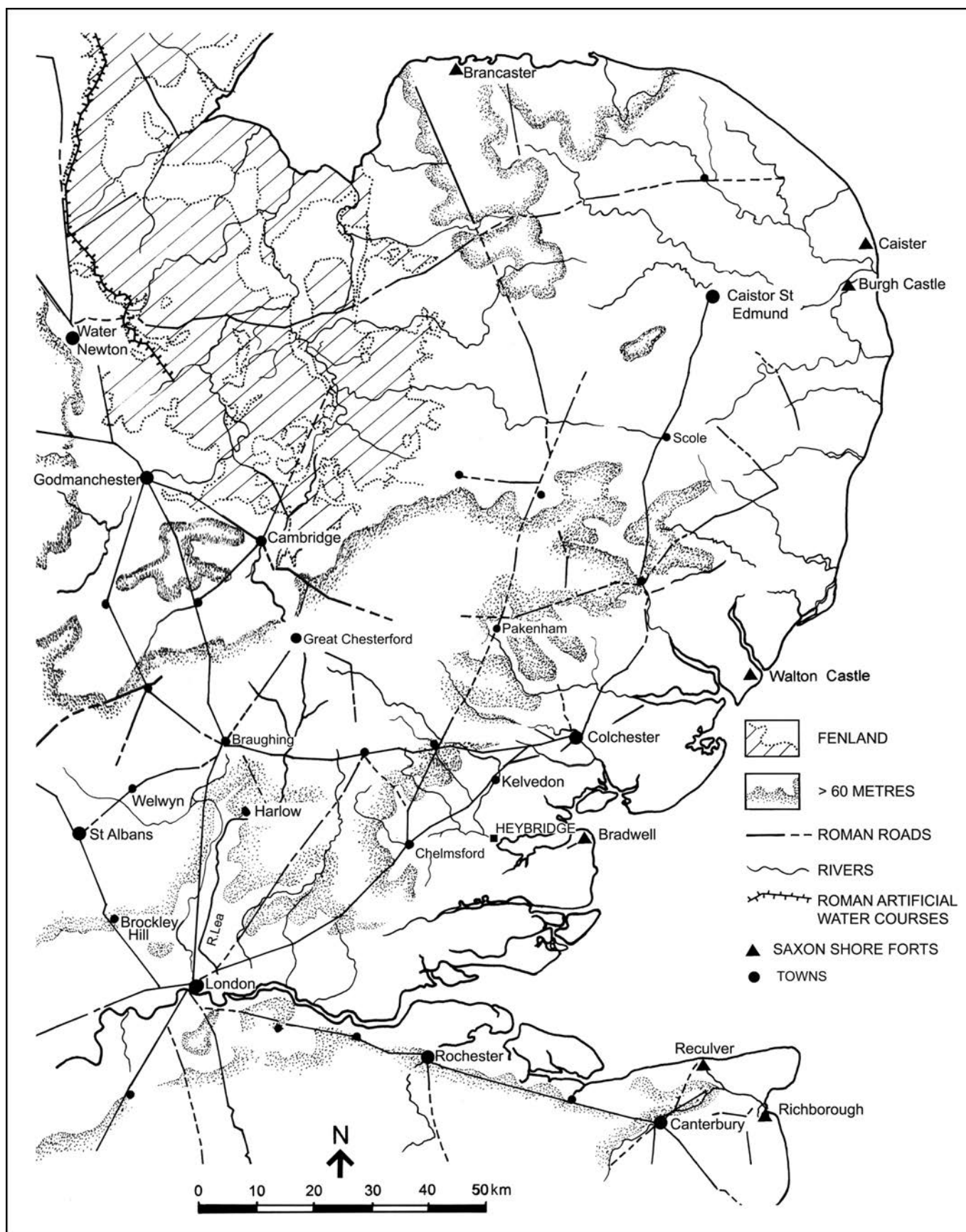
Figure 4.1 Roman East Anglia, showing sites mentioned in the text and the principal rivers

Site	County	No. of shrines	Site type, other notes
Elms Farm, Heybridge	Essex	2	Unenclosed ?village, ?central shrines
Baldock	Herts	1?	Unenclosed ?village, peripheral shrine
Little Waltham	Essex	1	Enclosed ?village, central shrine
Stansted ACS	Essex	1	Enclosed ?village, central shrine
Heathrow	Middlesex	1	Enclosed village
Danebury	Hants	4	Hillfort/oppidum, 1 central shrine + 3 others
Maiden Castle	Dorset	1	Hillfort/oppidum, shrine on ?high ground
South Cadbury	Somerset	1?	Hillfort/oppidum, central shrine

Table 4.1 Examples of Late Iron Age sites with shrines

status in this period, but they do serve to hint at the cohesive nature of the settlement from the late 1st century BC onwards. By the mid 1st century AD, the religious focus was of sufficient significance so as to influence the layout of the transition-period settlement and to warrant the rebuilding of the sacred structures on a far grander scale. The shrines, or the place they occupied, had indeed acquired an importance that, judging by the way the road network was constructed around this sacred area, was central to the settlement in the earlier 1st century.

While there are indications of a nucleated settlement pattern, Heybridge was unenclosed. Lacking major earthworks, such as the system of dykes surrounding Camulodunum (Hawkes and Crummy 1995), it may be concluded that it was a lesser or, at very least a *different* kind of focus. Study of the earthworks around both Camulodunum (outside Colchester) and Verlamion (outside St Albans) has concluded that they were constructed as much for display as defence — if not more so (Haselgrove and Millett 1997, 286; *contra* Hawkes and Crummy 1995, 162). Given that Camulodunum is mentioned by Roman authors, and was ultimately chosen as the site of the colonia capital, it seems apparent that Heybridge was of lesser status and perhaps had a narrower or different range of functions. Certainly, Heybridge cannot be interpreted as any kind of oppidum. On the basis of Haselgrove and Millett's definition of territorial oppida as non-urban, polyfocal, complexes comprising settlements, fields, communal places and a range of dispersed activities taking place in designated zones (1997, 286), Heybridge cannot qualify: it was a single, compact, even proto-urban occupation area.

Few Late Iron Age cemeteries have been found in close proximity to their contemporary settlements, as has been noted by Fitzpatrick (1997a, 228), a possible exception being Baldock (Burleigh 1995, 179–180). While this may be due to the dispersed or multi-focal nature of settlements, as is particularly evident at Late Iron Age Verlamion (Bryant and Niblett 1997, 273–4), the presence and close proximity of funerary features and settlement at Heybridge may be an expression of status. As many as twenty-two of the funerary features exhibit higher status elements, and at least one of these may be 'aristocratic'. Cremation burials are inferred from a corresponding number of pyre sites and pyre-debris dumps, rather than by the graves themselves. At very least, they confirm the presence of a local elite. The linear arrangement of pyre sites to the north of the settlement indicates that the settlement possessed outlying funerary areas or 'cremation fields'. Given that burial, and probably cremation, was evidently not accorded to the

whole of Late Iron Age society, they may well have been specialised and exclusive facilities associated with the settlement.

Function
In the absence of a clear and readily classifiable range of morphological traits (as is often the case with large, particularly unenclosed, Late Iron Age settlements in general), it is the artefactual record that yields much of the evidence for the level of importance of the early settlement. The pottery assemblage is a crude but effective indicator of settlement size and likely population density. The assemblage dated to the mid 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD accounts for *c.* 40% of the entire assemblage and was derived from a third of all excavated features that could be dated. That this quantity of material is confined to the first of some five centuries of the settlement life span is striking evidence of intense and widespread occupation. While intensity of occupation activity may not necessarily equate with importance, it is possible to estimate a total settlement area of some 20ha by the end of the Late Iron Age. Surely this settlement size alone, comparable to Baldock (Burleigh 1995, 179) and perhaps Braughing (Partridge 1981, 351), must indicate a certain degree of status that extended beyond the locality.

A more obvious indicator of settlement importance is the burial-related features, almost all of which indicate that Heybridge's population included members of a Late Iron Age elite. Their cremation burials and associated pyre-related features (Chapter 7) contained a range of imported pottery that is of a similar character to the aristocratic burials at Welwyn (Stead 1967; Hüssen 1983) and Folly Lane (Niblett 1999, 44). It is not possible to establish whether the presence of such an elite component within the general settlement population was the reason for, or product of, the perceived higher settlement status.

Coins and imported pottery are the principal artefact assemblages that inform us about the nature and importance of the settlement. Hobbs observes that the earliest coins at Heybridge were probably struck soon after the Gallic War, and demonstrate a level of settlement importance in the later 1st century BC that was in advance of other major Late Iron Age sites of the Essex-Suffolk coast (Hobbs, Vol. 2, Section 3.4). However, it is not clear if Gallo-Belgic staters and coins of the Remi represent continental trade or indicate the use of coinage in this period in much the same way as is proposed for the early pottery imports (*i.e.* as gifts or tokens, rather than money *per se*). Overall, the Late Iron Age coin assemblage is deemed to be well worn and so had been well circulated. The scattered distribution of this predominantly copper-

alloy assemblage, together with a lack of appearance in ritual contexts, implies loss during the course of frequent transactions and thus the likelihood of trade exchange (*sensu* Haselgrove). Haselgrove has suggested that copper-alloy coinage of the early 1st century AD was first released into circulation at major centres and gradually filtered out to the rural settlements (Haselgrove 1987). Thus, the quantity at Heybridge may show that it was one such centre with a recognised economic and political importance.

Of the imported ceramics, the high incidence of Dressel 1b amphorae is particularly relevant (*cf.* Sealey in Vol. 2, Section 3.2.3.1). It is necessary to appreciate the supply of Dressel 1b amphora to Heybridge against the backdrop of pre-conquest trade and political contact between Britain and the continent. As Sealey discusses in greater detail, the switch of amphora-borne trade from southern Britain to the south-east (largely Essex and Hertfordshire) is perhaps a product of the Gallic Wars. The 'escape' of Commius of the Atrebates to Britain, his severing of diplomatic links with Rome, and the establishment of the Trinovantes as clients of Julius Caesar in 54 BC all meant that political and trade attention now began to shift focus from the south to south-east coasts. Heybridge obviously benefited from this trade during the latter part of the century and into the 1st century AD. In addition to the amphorae, pottery from three main sources was recovered (Central Gaulish wares, Gallo-Belgic wares and north Gaulish white ware). There was a decline in the level of continental ceramic imports during the second quarter of the 1st century AD. Forms which commenced production after *c.* AD 30 are absent and the pattern of import for the glass vessels also shows a lack of mid 1st-century pieces (see Vol. 2, Section 3.6). The level of imports did not recover until the Neronian period and, even then, was never as prolific as it was during the late 1st century BC and early 1st century AD.

However, although a significant number of imported vessels were reaching Elms Farm prior to the conquest, it is apparent that Heybridge was *not* a port for continental trade and redistribution of commodities inland. This is not to say that such material did not arrive direct from the continent nor that it did not pass beyond the settlement, but that the importance of this was not great in terms of trade. This aspect is explored further in the economy subsection, below.

The majority of imports, most notably amphorae, appear to have remained at Heybridge, with few being found inland. Indeed, consideration of amphora findspots across Essex shows that it is largely restricted to the coast (*i.e.* Heybridge and Sheepen) (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.3.1). The site-specific distribution is a scattered one, indicative of general use rather than concentration in one vicinity that could constitute storage in a warehouse. Thus, the early settlement at Heybridge can be defined as a centre of *consumption* (at least of high-status goods).

That pre-conquest imported ceramics were scattered across the site and not restricted to any particular area, or to the burial-related features, suggests that their presence does not necessarily reflect the wealth of an individual or a single family group. Instead, this material may indicate that the acquisition and use of relatively exotic material was enjoyed by an extended number, perhaps all of the occupants of the settlement and that the community as a whole enjoyed a level of status that attracted such commodities. The simple fact that these early imports arrived at Heybridge at all, is perhaps a sign of importance in itself. That the contents of the transport vessels were consumed and the table wares used, shows that there were people present who could afford, attract or acquire them. The further implication of this, to issues of Late Iron Age society and politics at Heybridge, is pursued in Chapter 5.

The pattern of ceramic import supply may indicate that the apparent high status of the pre-conquest settlement was concentrated from the late 1st century BC to the early 1st century AD, and in stagnation soon after, even before the conquest (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.3.2). This may suggest that the early *floruit* of Heybridge was due to the presence, prestige and patronage of a single person. Although it is perhaps too tenuous to associate the fortunes of the Late Iron Age settlement with an historical figure such as Cunobelin, the late Iron Age king, it is tempting to speculate that the settlement's status was initially invested in a single individual or family of some political importance. Further exploration of possible historico-political links is attempted in Chapter 5. Thus, much of the imported material, particularly the wine amphorae and single items such as the *terra rubra* platter or the Italian mortarium from pyre debris deposit 15416 (Group 33, Fig. 3.1), may represent diplomatic gifts to, or personal possessions of this individual — some of which may have been redistributed subsequently. The presence of three sherds of a pre-conquest Augustan cast bowl suggests a prestige item, perhaps a gift. Thus, apparent decline, judged on the basis of the ceramics, may have been the result of the death of a key figure, their loss of political prestige, or their departure from Heybridge — perhaps to the increasingly important centre of Camulodunum.

If the early site was a 'showpiece' of Cunobelin's power, there would have been no-one with any interest in maintaining it after his death, so it would decline to its pre-Cunobelin status. In fact, the decline may have begun immediately on conquest, scarcely waiting for administrative reorganisation.

A large assemblage of fragments of the distinctive ceramic equipment used for late prehistoric and early Roman salt processing was recovered from the site. The proximity of the site to the coastal salterns may mean that the settlement was being used for the re-drying and repacking of salt for transport inland. Rippon (2000, 111) has noted that saltmaking occurs in close conjunction with major Late Iron Age centres such as Hengistbury Head, Maiden Castle and Olver in Dorset, Selsey in Hampshire, Old Sleaford in Lincolnshire and Camulodunum/Colchester, Essex.

During this period cattle were the most prevalent of the animal bones recovered, but a significant proportion of sheep and pig bones were also present. The age-at-death data shows that cattle were mostly killed when they had reached the subadult category whilst the sheep and pigs were split between the subadult and adult categories. The high proportion of cattle is typical of south-east England and the animal bone assemblage shows no signs of specific specialisation (Vol. 2, Section 4.2).

The view of early decline is perhaps overly simplistic, given that the settlement received what surely must have amounted to a massive boost when parts of it were extensively and dramatically redeveloped just prior to the conquest.

Transitional Late Iron Age and Roman periods
It is easier to discuss the function and status of the transitional and Roman period settlement (Periods 2B–5) of the mid 1st century AD onwards with reference to the well-developed debate surrounding towns and small towns. However, the simplistic nature of this debate has made it difficult to compare and contrast the relatively complex view we have of Heybridge with other sites. To date, such debate has either classified a settlement as a 'town' and explores its urban aspects in this context, or simply dismisses it as an 'other' settlement. There is no similarly evolved debate concerning the low-status rural settlements, from farmsteads to villages, and consequently no criteria that summarise their character. Indeed, few settlements have been described to lie between farmstead and town in size. Catsgore, Chisenbury Warren and perhaps Fotheringhay are the rare accepted examples of villages (Burnham 1995, 10). Thus, it is difficult to frame Heybridge adequately between the two, as is believed to be necessary by the authors in exploring status and function for much of the Roman period.

Having said this, we must also be careful to distinguish between merely characterising the various components of settlement morphology and attempting to answer the less tangible subject of status. Status, the relative importance of the settlement compared to other known settlements and settlement types, is more difficult to determine. The checklist of 'small town' characteristics set out by Burnham and Wacher (1990, 7–50; also Burnham 1995, 7–15) is based on the evidence of physical remains. Settlement size, plan, presence and sophistication of certain morphological features such as roads and building types and range of *activities* may be discerned relatively easily. However, these do not necessarily have a direct relationship to importance in the settlement hierarchy.

It seems that high status is generally judged on economic perceived prosperity (diversity of non-agricultural occupations, settlement expansion, density and sophistication of buildings) and administrative function (official and public buildings, inscriptions). An assessment of these indicators gives the degree of *romanitas* on display. Particularly in the case of 'small towns', this is at the expense of their social role, ephemeral in the archaeological evidence but vital to our understanding of function, none the less. Bearing in mind that the majority of these settlements have Iron Age precursors, which pre-date the imposition of a market economy, social role may be of equal if not greater importance than those of economy and administration/local government. Heybridge, being perhaps at its zenith a pre-conquest 'local centre', is no exception. For its importance within Trinovantian territory to be fully appreciated, the social dimension needs such consideration. Thus, the importance of Heybridge is here explored with reference to Burnham's internal morphology and function criteria and to his perceived broad trend in the development of small towns (1995, 9–14), with *additional* consideration given to explicit *social* functions. In addition, the following critical considerations of morphological and functional aspects of Heybridge span the mid 1st to 5th centuries AD and are not restricted to the immediate post-conquest period.

Morphology
Although the internal morphology of Heybridge has already been summarised in Chapter 3, and described in detail in the site narrative (Vol. 2, Section 2), it is necessary to evaluate the evidence critically, in comparison with other 'small towns'. A large amount of information has been accumulated during the course of numerous 20th-century excavations and conveniently summarised by Burnham (1995) and Burnham and Wacher (1990). However, such investigation has generally been small-scale and only characteristic of localised areas of settlements or else knowledge derived from aerial photography and fieldwalking and has produced only the most general of overviews. Thus, only individual 'diagnostic' elements can be discussed in relation to those of other sites, from which a composite insight into status may be gained.

Street systems
(Fig. 4.2)
That Heybridge was apparently provisioned with a developed internal street network *prior* to the conquest is the first and most obvious indication of high settlement status. Unlike in most early towns, the side streets appear to be integral to this original plan, rather than a later development. Thus, it appears that Heybridge's development was not organic, stemming from a linear development along a single roadside, but sudden and planned. The well-constructed nature of these metalled roads, and of the gravelled occupation surfaces laid between them, represent a determined effort to modify and lay out its centre in an orderly and sophisticated fashion that was surely imported from the continent. Other early regular street layouts have been identified at Wickham Hill (Braughing) and Baldock, both in Hertfordshire (Fig. 4.2). These have been considered to be original, or early, elements of these Roman settlements — '… both might well represent a reshaping of an existing layout as part of a general Roman initiative or of native imitation of contemporary development in nearby cities.' (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 26–7). While a few other sites in southern England, such as the Danebury oppidum (Cunliffe 1983) and more relevantly Silchester (Fulford 2001), are considered to have possessed *pre-conquest* metalled road networks, Heybridge is the first such instance tentatively identified in eastern England; the roads at Skeleton Green (Braughing) are deemed to be immediately post-conquest (Partridge 1981, 50–51).

The street system, and the extensive gravel occupation surfaces laid in between, did not extend across the whole of the occupation area, but defined the core, most important parts of the settlement. This is noted to be the case in other Roman 'small towns' such as Scole and Pakenham (J. Plouviez pers. comm.). The analogy of an American 'wild west' town, where streets suddenly give way to dusty tracks and tumbleweed, may be pertinent.

Given the Roman-style construction of the roads and the regularity of the central elements of its layout (Chapter 3), the remodelled settlement could be described as a proto-town. Clearly undertaken as a single episode, it appears that this included a degree of deliberate planning which could be construed as the virtual re-founding of the settlement along continental lines. That this apparently took place prior to the Roman conquest should perhaps not be totally unexpected. As has been appreciated for some
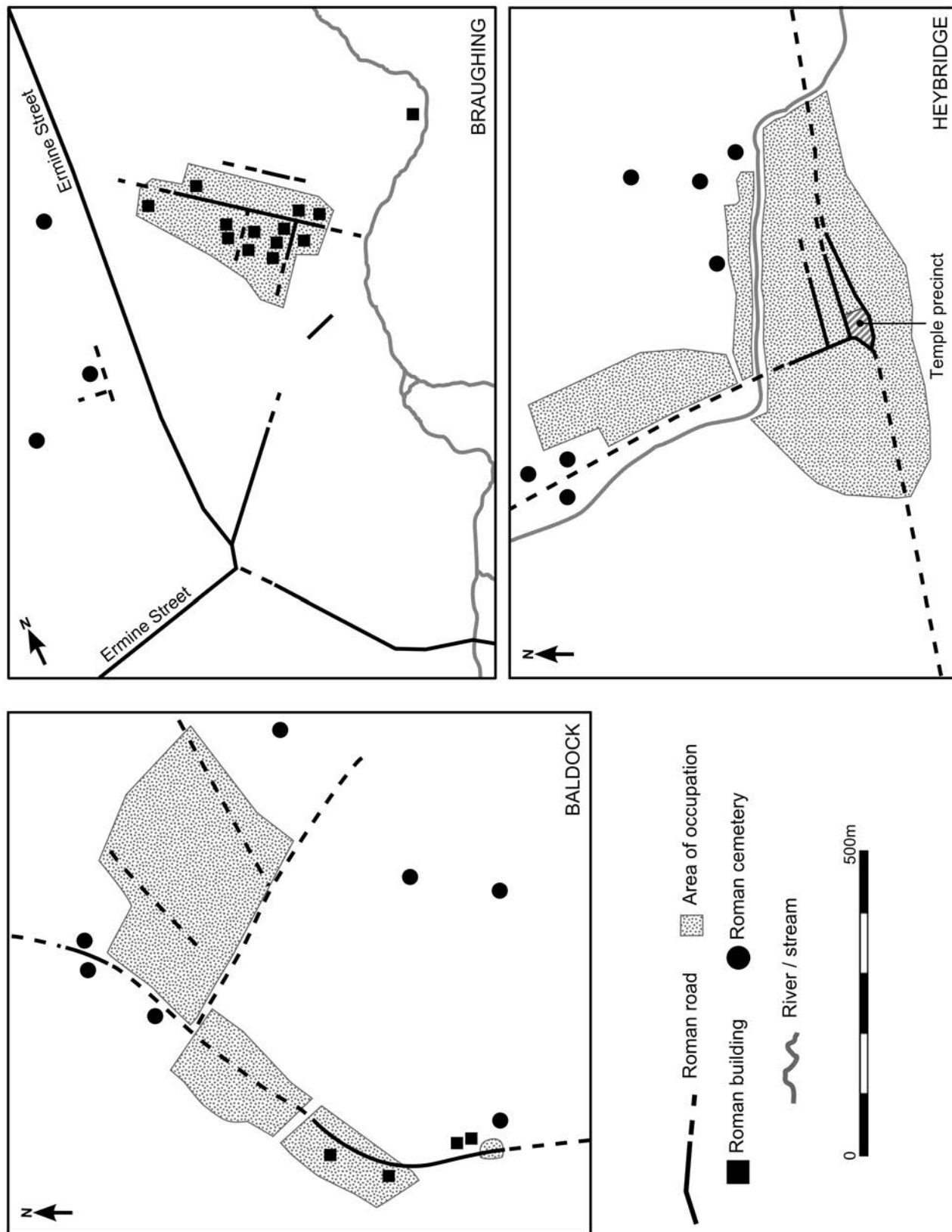
Figure 4.2 Comparative plans of early road systems: Baldock, Braughing, Heybridge (from plans in Burnham and Wacher 1990)

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time, the territory of the Trinovantes was already heavily Romanised (*e.g.* Millett 1990; Wickenden 1996, 77; Creighton 2000) and had been receiving imported metalwork, wine, and ceramics for at least three-quarters of a century. This contact with the continent, supported by the writings of Roman authors such as Strabo and Caesar himself, attests to a level of diplomatic contact that, in reality, was far stronger than is apparent in this material evidence. It is possible that members of the Trinovantian elite visited the continent, particularly Gaul, and saw, first-hand, the towns and cities of the Roman empire, an aspect that is pursued further in Chapter 5. Thus, Heybridge could have been the product of an individual's desire to develop their own 'place' along the lines of some of the lesser urban centres they may have encountered in Gaul (*i.e.* in the territories of related foreign elite).

An analogy has already been made that this undertaking must have rivalled the construction of a moderate-sized hillfort with single ditch and rampart. There is no doubt that it was a serious and concerted episode of reconstruction, not only in terms of scale but also in the planning, organisation and human resources necessary to conceive and complete the project. This surely indicates an elite presence within the settlement with the required power, wealth and access to the relevant expertise to mastermind such an undertaking, though this is further explored in Chapter 5. This remodelling episode, carried out at the end of the Iron Age, may have been the modified expression of status, seen earlier in the Late Iron Age, in the building of impressive and symbolic earthworks such as the dykes around Camulodunum and Verlamion.

Central core, zonation and land division
While it is evident that this infrastructure respected pre-existing settlement features (*e.g.* the religious focus), and may in some instances have formalised the approximate positions of earlier tracks/thoroughfares, the imposition of this system also imposed clear divisions. The resultant plots all quickly acquired their own characters and activities over much of the settlement became zoned, their different natures being particularly different at the settlement core. Thus, while the pre-existing religious focus was now clearly defined, perhaps being confined/condensed in the process, surrounding areas were newly established as either communal spaces (*e.g.* the 'open space' between Roads 3 and 5) or private plots (*e.g.* through Open Areas 24–28). Core areas may be distinguished by the presence of the gravel occupation surfaces (Fig. 3.3). Some of these had been laid directly on natural gravel and were clearly not the result of purely practical necessity. It is concluded that the provision of surfaces thus inferred particular importance upon the plots they covered.

Particularly beyond the settlement core, regular plots were established along the road/track frontages. While those in the centre tended toward the square, frontage plots were relatively narrow and rectilinear — typical of the narrow strip plots identified at such towns as Chelmsford (Priddy 1988, 263; Wickenden 1996, 91–3), Great Chesterford (Medlycott 2011) and Neatham (Millet and Graham 1986, 27 and 151–3). Where large plots do occur in other settlements, such as Godmanchester (Green 1975) and Dunmow (Wickenden 1988) and possibly Braintree (Drury 1976, 124) they seem to be part of the

early layout rather than later. The strip enclosures at Heybridge seem generally larger and less densely occupied than in other places accepted as 'towns'. This suggests that there was not a significant growth in either the settlement population or in the activities they undertook beyond the 1st or earlier 2nd centuries. The fact that the layout of these plots remained largely unaltered throughout the life of the settlement may be interpreted as settlement stagnation and that the settlement plan had already reached its greatest size and degree of development by this time.

Building types
In keeping with the majority of other 'small towns', a restricted range of building types is evident. The indigenous circular building tradition continued beyond the remodelling of the settlement. The cluster or compound of roundhouses continued to occupy one of the central plots adjacent to the temple precinct, revealed in Area I, beyond the conquest. While the continuance of the roundhouse has been recorded at other towns such as Godmanchester (1st century), Baldock (2nd century) and at Towcester and Alcester (both 4th century), as well as within some villa complexes, this group of buildings at Heybridge may have had a particular and enduring significance. None of the roundhouses showed signs of such prolonged survival nor of any Romanising traits such as the insertion of Roman-style floors as found at Normangate, Water Newton (Burnham and Wacher 1990).

In the Southern Zone, the roundhouses occupying middling positions within the plots were abandoned in favour of strip-buildings end-on to the road frontage within the 1st century AD. The predominance of simple rectilinear buildings is well attested in 'small towns' as is the absence or small number of official and public buildings and elaborate private town houses. Heybridge is no exception. Where Roman period dwellings were discerned, these were all of timber-frame construction, almost certainly with wattle and daub-infilled walls and thatched roofs. This timber-built tradition endured for the whole of the Roman period at Heybridge. This was probably due to the lack of local resources of stone, rather than the perceived early decline in economic status and prosperity preventing repair and redevelopment of buildings in stone. In support of this view, it should be noted that virtually all of the buildings at Great Chesterford were timber-built (Medlycott 2011).

Most of the rectilinear buildings were relatively small in comparison to those of other towns, averaging only 5×9m against examples from Godmanchester (*c.* 5×11m), Hibaldstow (*c.* 9.7×21.2m) and Sapperton (*c.* 11×20m); all are cited by Burnham and Wacher (1990, 18). Within and close to the central core of the settlement, larger rectangular buildings appear from the 2nd century onwards — though the quantity of excavated examples is small. Building 54 (Period 4, Open Area 33) was a 9×10.5m construction that occupied a prime road frontage/intersection location during the 3rd century. By the 4th century, this had been abandoned in favour of Building 58 that now enjoyed a central location within what was probably an otherwise largely *depopulated/empty* plot. These were still simple rectangular structures, for which no evidence of internal subdivision or embellishment survived. The only possible domestic

building of greater architectural sophistication was late Roman Building 64 that occupied the former temple precinct (Open Area 23). No aisled buildings, such as those at Ilchester, Neatham, Water Newton, Droitwich or Godmanchester (Burnham and Wacher 1990), have been identified. This may further suggest that only low status occupation persisted in the later settlement.

While a varying degree of 'Romanisation' is apparent within the construction materials of strip-buildings elsewhere, such as the use of painted wall plaster and tesselated floors, there is none evident within the simple buildings at Heybridge. Indeed there is little sign of any such embellishments until the late Roman period when, again, Building 64 is the only known structure to have contained a tessellated floor. Whether this small structure, in its isolation, qualifies as a town house along the lines of those found in Later Roman Chelmsford or Great Chesterford, is uncertain.

Wickenden has previously postulated a masonry *mansio* at Heybridge, citing the finding of roller-stamped box-flue tiles on the outskirts of Heybridge as evidence of its existence (1986, 64). While Building 54 could perhaps be postulated to have had an official or otherwise prominent function, this is unlikely. There is no direct evidence of particularly large or sophisticated buildings having been located within the excavated areas of the settlement. However, debris in the form of box-flue tiles, roller-stamped daub, *opus signinum* floor, painted wall plaster and window glass (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.6) do suggest the presence of probably only one (or perhaps two) grander buildings. Judging by the date of the features and dump deposits from which much of this material derived (beside the watercourse in Area R), this building was a relatively early feature of the Roman settlement, having been demolished by the early/mid 3rd century.

The only buildings that can be reliably identified at Heybridge as having had a public function were those that comprised the temple complex. From its immediate pre-conquest remodelling, this complex possessed a scale and grandeur of architecture that set it apart from all other structures within the settlement. Though startlingly new in design, the grand complex acknowledged the origins of this religious place by being located with reference to the earlier shrines. However, it was clearly rebuilt along Romano-Celtic lines. As is described elsewhere (Vol. 2, Section 2), the complex was rapidly developed in the 1st century AD, acquiring a number of ancillary buildings within a formal precinct, or *temenos*. The complex, though modified and arguably simplified over time, may betray some underlying 'Romanising' traits in its architecture (*e.g.* the portico frontage of the trapezoid enclosure) and is clearly of a similar nature and size to those at Uley (Woodward and Leach 1993) or Springhead (Andrews *et al.* 2011). As such, a certain degree of importance must have been accorded the settlement by association.

Other than the temple, the only other settlement features to have a possible public function were the open spaces, all of which were in the close vicinity of the temple and probably associated with it. These surfaced areas, principally that in front of the temple, between Roads 3 and 5, and perhaps that around the central well in Open Area 19, seem to have had a communal use. It is likely that this was a mixture of religious and civic use linked to the temple, its rituals and festivals. As such these open spaces do not qualify as public amenities in the sense that they probably had little to do with a Romanised (urban?) administration.

Environment
The archaeobotanical evidence is mainly confined to samples from waterlogged wells and the occasional deep ditch; these reflect varying use across the Roman period settlement. Greater quantities of woodworm beetles are recorded as present than at most rural settlements and is comparable to some Roman towns such as Alcester (Vol. 2, Section 4.6). This is indicative of a significant density of timber buildings, although Robinson also comments that the insect fauna is not as diverse as in the true urban centres of York and Lincoln (*cf.* Robinson, Vol. 2, Section 4.6). While there may have been a reasonable frequency of buildings toward the settlement focus, it is clear that it also contained areas of weedy, almost waste, land. These may have been uncultivated or neglected gardens and paddocks, although the impression is of few grazing livestock within the settlement. This is in contrast to the data from Well F241 on the Langford Road site where an environment of predominantly arable cultivation and no close habitation is evidenced (Jones *et al.* 1997, 43–4). Settlement neglect, already evident in the build up of silt on gravel and road surfaces in the later Roman period, appears to become more pronounced with an ever-growing component of weed and nettle-loving insect fauna being evident.

The animal bone assemblage attests to an open settlement to which wild fauna such as hare, badger, voles, mice and shrews had access. Johnstone and Albarella (Vol. 2, Section 4.2) suggest that badgers may have visited the settlement as scavengers attracted by domestic refuse, particularly if the refuse had been heaped on a midden. The presence of voles indicates open grassland in close proximity to the settlement and probably within parts of it.

Defences
As already discussed, the Late Iron Age settlement had no manmade defences. The apparent function of the Late Iron Age settlement, and its existence within the relatively stable social and political climate of the Trinovantian kingdom, makes it unlikely that there was any perceived need to provide it with defences. The earthworks around Camulodunum may be seen an expression of status rather than a means of protection (Crummy 1997). However, it is conceded that the location of Heybridge, enclosed as it was on at least three sides by river and salt marsh, may have afforded a degree of natural protection or simply delineation of its lands.

As is typical of so many of the 'small towns' in south-east England, Roman period Heybridge was undefended. Although the existence of a fort has previously been speculated in the Heybridge/Maldon vicinity (Wickenden 1986, 63), no defensive ditches or other earthworks were identified within the excavated area. Clearly, although already a place of some importance at the conquest, it was not considered to be of strategic value — unlike its neighbour, Camulodunum, a key political centre surrounded with its system of dykes.

Cemeteries
While the character and location of both Late Iron Age and Roman cemeteries are discussed in detail in Chapter 7,

their presence, particularly of the latter, does supply further information with regard to the importance of the settlement. Largely *ad hoc* discoveries of both cremation and inhumation burials, mostly made in the later 19th century, indicate the presence of a principal cemetery to the north-east of the settlement. A degree of continuance from pre- to post-conquest periods is indicated at what is presumed to be the main cemetery in the vicinity of The Towers and the New Cemetery in Heybridge (Fig. 1.4). The presence of high-status individuals — particularly in the late Roman stone and lead coffins found at The Towers (Wickenden 1986, 55–6) — perhaps needs some explaining in the light of apparent decline in settlement status. However, the burial evidence collectively indicates that Heybridge was a recognised focus for the disposal of the dead, possessing at least one organised cemetery, probably along a roadside. While its inhabitants were undoubtedly interred in this and in satellite 'family' plots, it is possible that the burial of *outsiders* was also accommodated. Perhaps this is the explanation for the presence of late Roman high-status burials *i.e.* inhabitants of a nearby villa continuing to be buried at what still remained a religious centre (if little else), by this time.

Function
At the time of its transformation into a substantial urbanised or Romanised settlement, Heybridge was unlikely to have been a centre of major economic importance — in the sense of the supply and distribution of commodities to its hinterland, at least. Settlement function, rather than morphology, should perhaps be a more reliable indicator of importance. Settlement function inevitably involves some consideration of economic attributes such as the *importance* of agricultural and craft or manufacturing activities, although more detailed discussion is given to these later. Of equal, if not more importance, are the less tangible functions of religious, social and political/administrative 'services', some of which are prevalent at Heybridge and probably constituted main functions, if not *raisons d'être*. Though the collective value of these functional attributes ensured the continuing importance and prosperity of a 'small town', it is argued that certain key functions may have served to perpetuate a settlement's lifespan, even in less advantageous circumstances — whether economic or otherwise. This may well have been the case for later Roman Heybridge. Economic prosperity and settlement importance or significance may not necessarily have had a particularly direct relationship here.

Analysis of both spatial and chronological trends within the very large coin assemblage has proved informative about the changing character and, to some extent, function of the different settlement areas (Guest, Vol. 2, Section 3.5). In the broadest terms, Heybridge conforms to the Reecean rule of thumb that settlements with large numbers of early coins are typically urban and those with late coins are rural and religious (Reece 1991). Heybridge appears to have been an aspiring town in the 1st century AD but 'declined' to a rural religious site by the 4th century. Furthermore, on comparison with Reece's coin profile for the Roman empire as a whole (Reece 1991), Heybridge displays similarities to towns of the Rhineland and Iberia in the early Roman period (to AD 260), but French and Belgian sites in the late Roman period. Over the extensive excavated area of the settlement the coin distribution pattern is the product of both temporal and spatial variation in function, as may be expected. This makes comparison of Heybridge difficult with other sites for which coin profiles are often based on smaller assemblages from excavations that have covered a far more restricted area of a settlement. These may only reflect changes within a single function area and so it is necessary to compare Heybridge with them on the basis of the coin zones identified by Guest (Vol. 2, Section 3.5, coin zones H1 to H4). Coin zone H1 is similar to Braintree, H3 is comparable to large towns with a late urban element (*e.g.* Cirencester) and H4 is paralleled by the Chelmsford temple and Dunmow shrine sites. Coin zone H2 is without parallel. The spatial distribution of pre-AD 260 coinage shows a general level of coin loss across the whole of the excavated settlement area which equates with the general extent of occupation activity, although there is an identifiable focus around the temple and cross-roads. Late 3rd- and early 4th-century coins exhibit a restricted distribution centred on these same central areas with those of the mid to late 4th century concentrating further on the temple.

Agriculture
Agriculture is generally recognised to have been an important activity within almost all 'small towns', whether demonstrated or assumed. More properly, agriculture was the one basic prerequisite that underpinned the very existence and survival of all settlements. The authors see no exceptions, with even the largest of 'cities' (*e.g.* London) and the most specialised of towns (*e.g.* Springhead) being fundamentally dependent on the exploitation of the surrounding countryside. Having said this, self-sufficiency in basic food commodities and production of surplus in order to participate in an agricultural market economy are not necessarily the functions that would have conferred status or importance upon a settlement. From this point of view, the agricultural function of Heybridge is more meaningfully discussed as an aspect of economy (see below); though its contribution, often as a facilitator, to status is acknowledged. This is perhaps well illustrated by the animal bone assemblage, of which the relatively high proportion of cattle to pig remains is considered typical of a settlement of middling status (King 1980). Furthermore, Johnstone and Albarella have also noted a similar animal economy to Braintree but different to that at Colchester and Chelmsford (Johnstone and Albarella, in Perring and Pitts forthcoming). The evidence from the food remains suggests that the inhabitants had a typically Romano-British diet of spelt, fruit, fish, shell-fish and meat (including soup kitchen bone deposits).

Manufacture and specialist activities/services
Manufacture, predominantly metalworking and pottery production, is directly attested by the archaeological record (*i.e.* hearths, crucibles and kilns) with a further range implied by associated materials and tools (*e.g.* carpentry, leatherworking). However, the scale of this activity and its general spread across marginal parts of the settlement, suggest that this was not of particular importance. Whether this constitutes self-sufficiency or production of retail goods is unclear. These activities certainly cannot be regarded as particular specialisms that infer a recognised function as a place of the manufacture

of commodities for distribution to the population of its hinterland or beyond, at least not in any significant quantity. Nor, for the Late Iron Age, is there any hint that metalworking was itself a 'special practice' that could confer an enhanced status on the settlement as has been speculated elsewhere (*e.g.* Hingley 1997; Haselgrove and Millett 1997, 285).

Although the animal bone assemblage does not attest to any significant specialist craft use (Johnstone and Albarella, Vol. 2, Section 4.2), the identification of typically 'Roman' butchery patterns suggests that the settlement had a large enough population to necessitate, or support, the services of a specialist butcher. Such occurrence is rare on rural sites and considered a more common trait of urban and military settlements.

Official and military

While the settlement morphology betrays no sign of official or military function, there is a small quantity of artefactual evidence that requires some consideration. The recovery of a possible legionary apron strap-end from the Crescent Road excavation (Wickenden 1986, fig.10.4) has been supplemented by some fifty-eight further items of military-style metalwork from Elms Farm (Major, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.12). However, no convincing case can be made for the presence of a military garrison stationed at Heybridge itself. Single find spots of military equipment similarly occur at various other Essex 'small towns' such as Dunmow, Braintree and Kelvedon (Wickenden 1996, 77). In view of this, the Heybridge examples need represent no more than casual loss by military personnel passing through; perhaps between *Colonia Claudia Victricensis* (Colchester) and *Caesaromagus* (Chelmsford), or out to the fort at Bradwell-on-Sea (*Othona*). Alternatively, Wickenden has speculated that a higher incidence of military metalwork at Harlow could be due to soldiers visiting the religious site there (Wickenden 1996) — a hypothesis that could be extended to Heybridge with its well-developed temple complex, although such finds are conspicuously absent from this part of the settlement. A third interpretation of the occurrence of this style of metalwork is that military equipment, or items in a military-style, were also adopted as a civilian fashion — particularly through the circulation of 'army surplus' or the return of army veterans to their home settlements (Millett 1990, 60).

While Crummy (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2) suggests that the presence of Knee, P-shaped and Crossbow brooches, all of which were popular with military and civil administration personnel, may hint at an 'official' presence at Heybridge, there is a lack of supporting evidence. These brooches are generally found in towns in south-east England and may have been brought to the site by visitors from such places as Colchester, coming to the temple or markets and fairs. Indeed, the picture of general settlement decline and contraction from the later 2nd century onwards would make a later military or administrative presence unlikely. Consideration of the samian assemblage (Dickinson, Vol. 2, Section 3.2.3.4) and the animal bone has not revealed any hint of Roman military or an administrative elite presence, the latter being indicated by the presence of pig (especially suckling) and 'exotica' such as crane and other wild fowl and game (*e.g.* Caerleon; Zienkiewicz 1993, 77). Returning briefly to a point of morphology, this declining

importance probably ensured that the settlement was not furnished with late Roman defences; there was no military or administrative function located at an urban core that required protection.

Religious and industrial specialisms
(Fig. 4.3)
Although a specialist industrial function for Heybridge has already been dismissed, the possibility of a primary importance as a religious centre is very strong (Chapter 6). Of course, it is easy to attach great, possibly inflated importance to the temple complex since it is a very obvious and dominant part of the settlement morphology within the area excavated. The attribution of particular specialisms, narrowly classified as either religious or industrial in nature, to certain 'small towns' has often been undertaken on the basis of only a very partial view of the whole settlement (*e.g.* Burnham and Wacher 1990). That many such sites may, in fact, possess a range of hitherto unknown or undefined functions is a very strong possibility; Harlow, given the likely extent of occupation east of the temple precinct (Bartlett 1988) need not have been a single function town. However, it is conceded that there are a number of settlements with apparently centrally important temples (Fig. 4.3), such as Irchester (Burnham and Wacher 1990), Springhead (Andrews *et al.* 2011), Wycombe (Lewis 1966) and perhaps Frilford (Hingley 1985). As Burnham and Wacher have noted: '… there were sometimes special functions which at first aided the foundation, and later the survival, of certain small towns. But the existence of these functions does not mean that the towns depended on them exclusively …' (1990, 33). This said, it is evident that the religious complex was an important part of Heybridge and, as argued in Chapter 5, its function as a place of worship, veneration, and possibly pilgrimage no doubt contributed to its enhanced settlement status.

A number of sanctuaries have been postulated to lie on civitas boundaries (*e.g.* Harlow and Great Chesterford) suggesting that they functioned as inter-tribal meeting places, markets or fairs as much as religious foci. It is possible that Heybridge performed such a function, perhaps with the river Chelmer even constituting something of a recognised boundary within Trinovantian territory. The significance of Heybridge as a religious centre seems to become more apparent as the settlement as a whole stagnated in the mid and late Roman periods. By this time, it is probably true to say that its religious function had become its principal specialisation, perhaps even its *raison d'être*.

Social

While Heybridge clearly declined in status in the post-conquest period — because it failed to develop as a Roman centre of trade, commerce and administration — it may well have retained an importance as a *British* centre. Perhaps principally due to its temple and to the social/political significance of the settlement, Heybridge still had a role, though not necessarily one that met Roman criteria nor fitted into the settlement hierarchy particularly well. We should perhaps be careful that the designation of settlement importance is not determined by reference to a too-narrow set of criteria (*i.e.* solely based on 'Roman values' of economy and administration).

Prominent settlement status was expressed at a number of centres in the building of defences, particularly in the 3rd century, and in the creation of grand town houses, despite the apparent depopulation of their interiors. The lack of defences and town houses at Heybridge makes it difficult to assess the prosperity and status of its population. The absence of significant evolution of settlement morphology following its laying out at the end of the Late Iron Age, the absence of elaborate buildings and the apparent contraction of occupation from the late 2nd century onwards, contrasts with increased material culture as evidenced by the contents of the later rubbish pits. As already noted, the rich late Roman burials at The Towers attest to the presence of elite folk somewhere in the vicinity, if not actually resident in the settlement.

Latest Roman and early Saxon (Period 6)

By the end of the 4th century, almost all of the elements of settlement morphology that had previously conferred at least a degree of status, had ceased to function or vanished out of sight. The road network had largely silted over, or else had been built upon. Rectilinear Building 59 (Open Area 45) and less substantial Structure 51 and Building 61 (Open Area 60) clearly show that neither the north–south nor east–west roads functioned as thoroughfares and that settlement was now widely dispersed across the terrace. While it appears that the temple stood, and was respected, until the very end of the Roman period, its physical state and functionality by this time are not certain.

However, although the more urban characteristics of the settlement had been lost earlier in the 4th century, if not
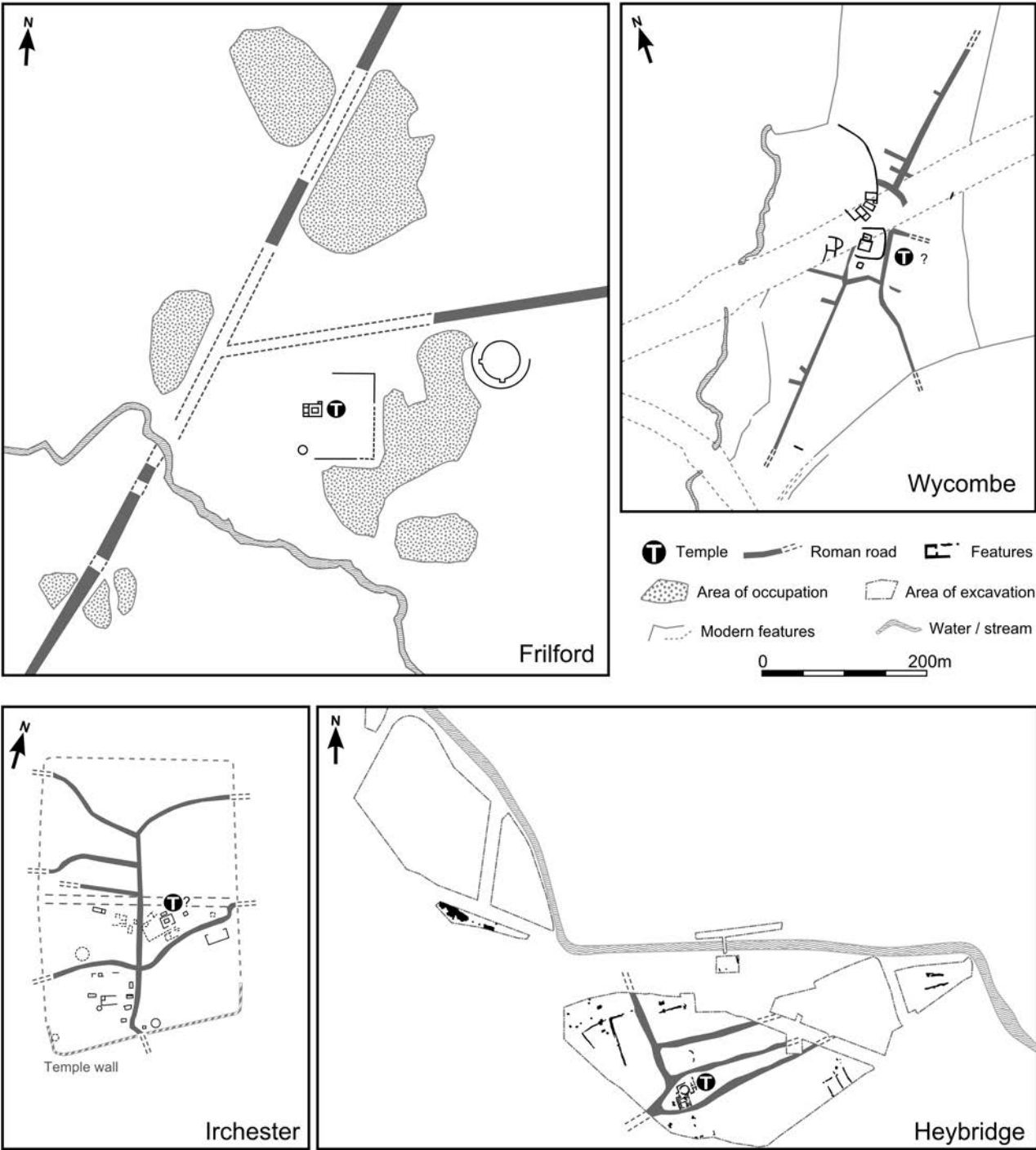
Figure 4.3 Comparative town plans with centrally placed temples: Frilford, Wycombe, Irchester, Heybridge

before, the reduced settlement remained a viable entity. An indication of this may be found in the animal bone assemblage, where the cattle stock improvements of the 1st and 2nd centuries were maintained, although not furthered, to the end of the Roman period. From this it is possible to speculate that a number of Roman practices continued this late, although whether these extended beyond agriculture is unknown.

On the appearance of Saxon settlers, it is likely that the Roman-period settlement had all but ceased to exist — probably comprising only a dispersed rural farming community and a revered ruin. Saxon settlement was located on the peripheries of the former Roman 'town', as is evident from the positions of sunken-featured buildings in Areas L, R and W (Buildings 65, 67–8 and 69 respectively). Although a degree of association between surviving Roman settlement features and those of apparent early Saxon character is posited, in terms of survival and reuse, such instances are few and there seems little point in discussion of settlement function and status beyond the late 4th century.

Conclusion

It would seem that Heybridge possesses many of the morphological criteria that qualify it as a 'small town' in the generally accepted sense. However, comparison of its development, particularly in terms of prosperity, growth and decline, with the perceived broad trends for Roman towns in general, reveals that this is misleading. Heybridge arguably possessed a range of urban attributes only early in its life; *i.e.* during the 1st to earlier 2nd centuries. Indeed, its exceptionally early provision with a sophisticated internal street network that defined zoning of activities, and presence (though possibly not predominance) of a religious centre, would appear to rank Heybridge as a 'middle' to 'upper order' settlement in Burnham's proposed tripartite division of small towns (1995, 10–12) and certainly as a 'secondary centre' of King (1995).

However, this initial period of growth and prosperity was short lived. The mid 1st-century explosion of settlement development was in contrast to the perceived slow development of towns in general throughout the second half of the 1st century. It is as if the precocious development of Heybridge pre-empted this more gradual foundation and growth. For a short time, Heybridge may have constituted one of the most Romanised urban settlements in Britain (*i.e. c.* AD 40–50). It could even be postulated that the conquest, itself, was its ruin; bringing with it a new set of *stringent* criteria of place and function that centred upon economic roles that affected the emergent settlement hierarchy, which Heybridge had tried to pre-empt. By the 2nd century, a time when many other settlements were developing urban or town-like attributes, Heybridge was entering stagnation. No further expansion or development of its street network was undertaken and land use and building density do not show increasing overall settlement area or population. Indeed, from the later 2nd century, it appears from the excavated evidence that only the religious centre continued to prosper. But for the continued importance of the temple throughout the 3rd and 4th centuries, Heybridge may well be regarded as one of Burnham's 'lower order' settlements (Burnham 1995, 10–12), at best a village, for the rest of its existence. Again, by way of stressing the unusually early chronology

of this decline, Chelmsford, with its official and religious functions, as manifested by the *mansio* and temple, did not decline and contract until the 4th century (Wickenden 1992).

The late Roman settlement continued to contract towards the settlement core, of which the temple complex continued to be one of the most important elements — if not the only element — to the end of the 4th century. While the late 2nd and 3rd centuries may be summarised as a period of maintenance of the settlement core, the 4th century was one of accentuated decline and neglect that extended into its heart, stopping short only at the temple itself.

Consideration of status has shown that the perceived importance of a settlement was measured using different criteria either side of the Roman conquest. Heybridge, although an agricultural community throughout its life, had a significance that was based on personal power, prestige and cultural/religious identity during the Late Iron Age. This may well have been bolstered by its advantageous location on the east coast and proximity to Camulodunum, which allowed initial confirmation of its high status perhaps through diplomatic contact with, and export to, the Roman world. However, with Romanised settlement status measured by economic function and prosperity, a civil administration controlled by centralised government and its reliance upon primary places, the *Civitates*, Heybridge could not meet all requirements and quickly waned. This is not to say that Heybridge was not regarded as a place of some continued importance, only that by this time it no longer satisfies our current view of what constitutes a Roman 'town'. As Creighton reminds us (2000, 204–7), *Roman-period* definitions of a town depended not on the functions of a place but on its ritual foundation and recognition as a town. However, such speculation is not particularly useful. It has become clear in recent years that the diversity of settlement types in Roman Britain is much wider than our simple classifications can cope with and that a more fluid approach is necessary. Precisely where any given site fits into a hierarchy, spectrum or continuum is perhaps less important than understanding it in its own regional context (Chapter 8).

II. Economy

Very much interlinked with status, and often mistakenly used as the main indicator of settlement importance, is economy. Economic fortune is important to the maintenance of status and survival of a settlement in the Roman period, though less so in the Late Iron Age. In addition, such prosperity is generally viewed in black-and-white terms of agriculture and manufacture; it is argued here that the provision of *services* (*e.g.* religious) may be an equally important aspect of at least some 'small town' economies and more specifically of Roman-period Heybridge.

As well as identifying the range of economic activities, it is necessary to define their volume and their value in terms of subsistence and surplus; surplus, here, being defined as production beyond that of domestic risk-buffering (van der Veen and O'Connor 1998, 139). For Heybridge, the major categories of economic activity may be summarised as follows:

- Agricultural (arable and pastoral);

- Exploitation of natural resources (woodland, marine, mineral);

- Manufacturing (craft and industrial production);

- Trade and exchange;

- Services.

Rather than approach the subject of settlement economy on a chronological basis, consideration of these various economic categories, and of their various component activities attested in the archaeological record, is attempted. For each, the relative importance over time is assessed. Although meaningful statements about relative scale, importance and income are difficult to make on the basis of some areas of the excavated evidence, it is at least possible to produce what amounts to an inventory of available materials, resources and skills present in and around the settlement. This surely is useful as a means of establishing the nature of the subsistence economy, identifying potential surplus/tradeable production and ascertaining the relative degree of self-sufficiency and sustainability of the community.

As may be expected, the economy of a secondary settlement such as Heybridge can be discerned to be a complex interplay of agricultural and manufacturing activities that display changing emphasis through time. Stratigraphic/structural remains, environmental, animal bone and, particularly for the exploration of manufacture and trade, artefactual assemblages are collectively informative. Where appropriate, consideration of the latter on the basis of finds function categories is employed (see also Vol. 2, Section 3.7.1).

Agriculture
(Table 4.2)
First and foremost, any discussion of Late Iron Age and Roman settlement economy must focus upon agriculture — except, perhaps, in the most urban of places. This is no exception in relation to Heybridge, as is revealed by consideration of land use both within its immediate hinterland and within the settlement itself. Table 4.2 presents a summary of the foodstuffs that have been recovered or can be inferred from the site. As is demonstrated below, there is a degree of interdependence between arable and pastoral regimes, including the use of crops as fodder, hay-meadows, and cattle as a source of traction and manure, as well as between the site and its wider estuarine landscape.

Arable production
It is clear that Heybridge occupied a developed agricultural landscape from the Late Iron Age onwards and that a high value was placed upon the well-drained upper gravel terraces of the Blackwater and Chelmer valleys. As noted in Chapter 3, the settlement area was confined to the more marginal, lower-lying land — a reflection of the importance of fertile and productive soils to its occupants. Judging from that part of the field system examined in Area W (Figs 2.2 and 2.3) this field system had been created at the end of the 1st century BC or beginning of the 1st century AD, although a less developed field system of Middle Iron Age to Late Iron Age date had preceded this (Atkinson and Preston 2001). The large field size of the later system, and the

predominance of spelt wheat remains in the plant macrofossil assemblages recovered from contemporary settlement features (*cf.* Monckton, Vol. 2, Section 4.7.1), suggests that the main use of the gravel terrace landscape was cereal cultivation, as is still the case today.

As discussed elsewhere (Chapter 5), wheat production is likely to have been of prime importance to the Trinovantes. The extensive and developed nature of the Late Iron Age agricultural landscape in the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys is highly suggestive that a cereal surplus was regularly created and so it may be imagined that this situation brought about a degree of social stability. The ability of this area to produce a grain surplus is argued to have been attractive to the Roman empire and may have been a very real factor in the establishment of strong diplomatic links during the early 1st century AD (see Chapter 5). The citing of corn, by Strabo (1923), as a significant British export, amongst others, in the Late Iron Age may substantiate this. The success of Late Iron Age arable practice would seem to be confirmed in the apparently static nature of the agricultural landscape into the post-conquest period. The field system, as investigated within Area W, remained unchanged for a further 150 years and was actively maintained during this time. It may be presumed that an emphasis on the cultivation of wheat remained similarly unchanged.

The plant macrofossil evidence for Late Iron Age and early Roman cereal cultivation is almost exclusively derived from the settlement itself, where food processing and preparation took place, and therefore cereals were more likely to be burnt and therefore preserved. Processing of cereals, denoted by the presence of charred processing waste within settlement features, was undertaken within the occupation plots of domestic habitation areas such as the Southern Zone. As Angela Monckton has noted, spelt wheat was stored as spikelets during the Late Iron Age (Vol. 2, Section 4.7.1). Thus, the presence of this processing waste within the settlement area is probably due to the preparation of relatively small quantities of cereals for domestic storage and use. This is perhaps supported by the distribution of quern stones across the areas of domestic occupation (Major, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.4.6)

While it is likely that some spelt wheat grain was parched and stored for personal rather than communal use, there remains the matter of consideration as to the storage and use of the hitherto postulated surplus. No large-scale processing structures (*e.g.* corn-driers) or buildings that may be interpreted as granaries have been recognised at Heybridge for either the Late Iron Age or early Roman periods. However spelt spikelets could have been stored in any type of building and it is possible that grain surplus did not remain on site for long and so required only limited storage facilities. It is likely that such a surplus would have been sold or passed on in the same part-processed state. Whether this surplus would have constituted a market commodity to those that produced it is unclear, particularly in view of the idea posited later that it may have been appropriated by the landowner or by a ruling tribal elite, perhaps as a form of tribute or taxation (Chapter 5).

The primacy of cereal production appears to be maintained until the mid 2nd century, with wheat predominant, but pastoralism gained some ground in the mid to later Roman period. Alterations and modifications

undertaken on the field system of the hinterland, through the insertion of partitions and sub-enclosures into the pre-existing system, amount to a decrease in size of some of the fields closest to the settlement (compare Figs 2.4 and 2.5). The small areas enclosed and the insubstantial nature of their boundaries suggests that they were marked by fences and/or hedges rather than ditches, which may have been more effective in retaining livestock. This aspect of mid and later Roman pastoralism is taken further below, although it is worth considering here that this may in part denote a 'direct manuring' practice (van der Veen and O'Connor 1998, 133–4) within arable fields. Inspection of the cultivated surface of the modern fields

prior to, and during, topsoil stripping revealed very little cultural material in the ploughsoil. This absence may be a further indication that direct manuring by grazing livestock, rather than by the application of settlement occupation waste (*i.e.* indirect manuring), was indeed employed throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. However, this was not corroborated by a programme of soil phosphate analysis during fieldwork and remains speculative.

While some of the fields closest to the settlement seem to have been converted to pastoral use, the majority of the landscape probably remained under cereal cultivation. Further modifications in the mid Roman period saw the

Period	Cereals, crops	Herbs, edible plants	Fruit and nuts	Meat	Poultry and game	Fish and shellfish	Other food and drink
Late Iron Age– Early Roman Period 2 Mid 1st – early 2nd century	Spelt Emmer B.wheat Barley Flax Cereal*	Legumes?	Hazel nuts Bramble Sloe	Beef Mutton Pork Red deer	Chicken Duck Small wader Woodcock	Eel Shad Small Gadid Plaice Flounder Mullet fam. Oysters Mussels	Milk (goat)
Early Roman Period 3 Mid 2nd–3rd century	Spelt ++ B.wheat Barley Oat, wild Emmer Stored grain (Ins.) Flax Peas*	Coriander# Dill # Beet? Opium-poppy # Cornsalad Mint (Sainfoin)	Hazel nuts Walnut # Hawthorn Elder Bramble Sloe Cherry # Bullace Plums #	Beef Mutton Pork Roe deer	Chicken Swan Ducks Plover Small wader	Eel Herring Shad Salmonid Saithe Sm Gadid Flounder Plaice Oysters ++ Mussels Whelks Cockle	Milk (goat) Honey (bee) Malt/beer
Middle Roman Period 4 4th century	Spelt ++ Emmer few Barley few Oat few Peas* Grapevine*	Mint Wild celery	Hazel nuts Sloe Bramble Elder	Beef Mutton Pork Deer	Chicken Geese Teal Woodcock Small wader	Eel Herring Salmonid Whiting Poor cod Mackerel Flounder Oysters ++ Mussels Whelks	Milk (goat) Malt/beer Grapes/wine
Mid–Late Roman Periods 4–5	Spelt B.wheat Emmer few Barley few Peas*	Mint	Hazel nuts Bramble Elder Sloe Cherry # Grape #	Beef Mutton Pork Deer	Chicken Ducks Woodcock Plover Curlew	Fish present Oysters+ Mussels Whelks	-
Late Roman Period 5	Spelt ++ B.wheat few Barley Oat, few	Mustards? Legumes?	Hazel nuts Sloe Cherry #	Beef Mutton Pork Red deer Hare	Chicken Geese Ducks Plover Woodcock Small wader	Eel Herring Pike? Red mullet Grey mullet Plaice Flounder Dab Halibut Oysters Mussels Whelks Cockle	-
Late Roman– Saxon Period 6	Barley Spelt	Legumes?	Hazel nuts	Beef Mutton Pork Red deer Roe deer	Chicken Geese Ducks Woodcock	Fish present Oysters Mussels Whelk	-

Summary of the evidence for food from plant and fish remains found in samples, together with shells and animal bones from archaeological excavations at Heybridge, Essex
Key: * = pollen, Ins = insects, ++ = abundant, # = exotic plants, imported or introduced, fam. = family

Table 4.2 Foods available at Elms Farm, Heybridge, Essex, by period

creation of new entrances into the 'wheat fields' and the construction of relatively large and sophisticated crop processing structures (*i.e.* drying floors or corn-driers) in close proximity to them (Fig. 3.10). This seems to represent a real development in agricultural management that amounts to the streamlining or rationalising of the process of cereal cultivation. The crops may have been processed for use in the settlement, or possibly dehusked for trading elsewhere, or prepared for malt production (malt could also be traded). This is the earliest evidence at Heybridge of processing being undertaken 'at source', presumably in order to reduce the transportable bulk of the wheat and to remove it from the fields as economically as possible. This may be interpreted as part of an effort to increase productivity and reduce cost — an action that could be related to the increasing demands of the Roman administration for higher taxes, often in kind, ultimately to fund the activities of the Roman army on the continent.

While it may be reasonably concluded that such developments constitute an attempt to increase production, the basis on which this was brought about is less clear. Here, the strategies of 'intensive' versus 'extensive' production regimes must be considered in relation to the excavated evidence. Following van der Veen and O'Connor's definitions of intensive and extensive production (1998, 127–8), the main thrust of extensification (*i.e.* the increase of output by increasing the area under cultivation) had probably already been undertaken in the later Iron Age. This extensification of agriculture into large fields is indicated by the types of weeds found. It is postulated that the mid Roman changes constitute the adoption of more intensive agricultural practices.

It is significant that the field system modifications outlined above coincided with both the increase in cattle numbers and their stock improvement (*cf.* Johnstone and Albarella, Vol. 2, Section 4.2). The kill-off pattern for these later Roman cattle further reveals that an increasing number of animals survived into adulthood and old age; this feature suggests that more cattle were required for the purpose of traction, principally ploughing and haulage of produce. Further evidence for the role of cattle-based traction and haulage comes in the form of the nine ox goads recovered during the excavation (Vol. 2, Section 3.77). This may be interpreted as evidence of the introduction of more intensive farming practices that were initiated *outside* the settlement community; presumably by the Roman administration via its local and regional representatives.

Pastoral activity
The cattle-dominated nature of the animal bone assemblage, at times reaching 90% of the total, clearly signals the importance of this animal to the economy of the settlement. Indeed, it is considered that this was second in importance only to the cereal crop. This reliance upon cattle is typical of Eastern England and increasingly so through the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. This growth in numbers of cattle is itself significant and is at its most apparent at the conquest, beyond which further increase is relatively slight but constant, reaching its peak by the mid 4th century (*cf.* Johnstone and Albarella, Vol. 2, Section 4.2).

The Late Iron Age and early Roman kill-off patterns for cattle are similar at Heybridge and reveal that most were reared for beef but a significant proportion kept for breeding and traction. Thus, this mainstay of pastoral activity seems to have continued largely unchanged in the period of transition from Briton to Roman. One exception is that of stock improvement, denoted by an increase in cattle size. This may be construed as a direct consequence of the conquest, particularly if this is interpreted as the product of the introduction of different genotypes (Vol. 2, Section 4.2). It is speculated that the imposition of the fort and town at Colchester, and the resulting increased meat requirement, may have prompted the army or civil administration to quickly improve the local stock that supplied it. The butchery evidence is suggestive of brined and cold-smoked joints (Dobney 2001, 41) as opposed to hot-smoked joints; no doubt the ready access to salt and brine would have made brined joints the most attractive option for the inhabitants. What proportion of this cured meat was being traded out of the town is unknown, although again the proximity and growing population of Colchester might suggest its destination.

A second 'episode' of cattle improvement seems to have been brought about during the mid Roman period. Combined with the steady increase in cattle numbers during the mid and late Roman periods, it would appear that there was a degree of change in the pastoral regime. As has already been alluded to, an increasingly significant proportion of these animals appear to have been bred primarily for traction rather than meat. Nevertheless, it may be concluded that this represented a real increase in meat production for which the stimulus of an ever-increasing military provisioning demand may be speculated. This may be supported by certain elements of modification to the field system outlying the settlement. In particular, the mid Roman enclosure defined by ditch 25098 (and associated features), with its splayed, funnel-like, entrance at its south-east corner, perhaps represents a paddock or stockade. An increased animal husbandry function, perhaps even cattle ranching, might be inferred within the immediate hinterland. However, simple direct manuring practices, as mentioned above, cannot be ruled out entirely.

The role of cattle in the supply of dairy products is thought to have been minimal in Roman Britain. Milk was most likely acquired at a domestic subsistence level from goats kept in the settlement area for this specific purpose. Typically, there is evidence for small numbers of goats being present within the domestic plots at Elms Farm (Vol. 2, Section 4.2).

In review, the use of cattle primarily as traction animals with a secondary use as a meat source is common in Roman Britain, with parallels at both Lincoln (Dobney *et al.* 1996) and Exeter (Maltby 1979). Clearly, cattle were regarded as multi-purpose beasts throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, particularly in the countryside. Their role as beasts of burden and traction is perhaps best illustrated by the significant number of ox goads amongst those objects identified as being of agricultural use (Major, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.7).

Agricultural land use was not restricted to the cereal-growing land to the north. Heybridge was, after all, surrounded by a diverse landscape that also included pasture and marsh. It is likely that the lower-lying areas of the terracing, to the south and east of the settlement, were utilised as pasture with the margins of the salt marsh being particularly appropriate for grazing sheep. Sheep, like

cattle, were subject to non-specialist use, although it must be borne in mind that direct evidence of sheep husbandry for wool production is archaeologically invisible. However, the abundance of artefacts associated with textile manufacture, particularly in the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods must be taken as proof of the importance of their fleeces as well as meat (see 'Textile production', below). The kill-off patterns for sheep, though slightly variable over time, show that most animals were slaughtered at between eighteen months and three years old; either as lambs or as prime mutton. Large-scale breeding does not seem to have been practised, although slaughter at two to three years suggests that they were kept long enough to produce at least one fleece, one lambing and a quantity of milk. However, the sheep remains represent only the settlement consumption and it remains likely that a larger part of the actual sheep population is 'missing', the younger animals having been traded, presumably 'on the hoof', to such places as Colchester and perhaps Chelmsford.

It is interesting that, in contrast to the cattle, the sheep stock was not improved until the mid Roman period, although it is speculated that two markedly bigger rams in Period 3 contexts might constitute some of the new stock animals brought in to achieve this (Vol. 2, Section 4.2). Thus initially, Late Iron Age sheep husbandry practices seem to have persisted and may indicate the overriding importance of cereals and cattle to the agricultural economy. Only as part of the mid Roman intensification of agricultural production were sheep actively improved.

The changing nature of the hinterland, seemingly indicating intensified arable production *and* increased pastoralism being brought about roughly at the same time, compares closely with Going's overview of later rural land use for Essex and the south-east (1996, 103–4). Settlements such as Mucking appear to display broadly similar traits in their agricultural development, although Going would see the changes of the later Roman era as the product of *latifundia* (large landed estates), as would others such as Faulkner (2000) and, to an extent, Millett (1990, 203–4). A largely pastoral regime has been speculated for other Late Iron Age and early Roman rural sites investigated in the lower Blackwater valley, such as the postulated stock enclosures at Chigborough Farm (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 104). However the Elms Farm evidence shows that in the immediate vicinity of the site a more mixed local agricultural economy is likely. Although improvement and expansion in agricultural practice through the Roman period can be offered with some conviction, the extent to which such agricultural developments were instigated by, or implemented with, the active participation of the indigenous population is far from clear. Being a country-wide phenomenon, it could be speculated that improvements were the product of the provincial administration though their chronology is not yet sufficiently understood to allow judgement as to whether or not this was the result of a single set of specific directives. On the other hand, given the apparent lack of an administrative presence at Heybridge, perhaps such opportunities were readily taken up by at least elements of its population.

Kitchen/subsistence, gardens, etc.
While we have so far applied a rigid and artificial division between arable and pastoral farming, the two were clearly not practised in isolation of one another. The place that we particularly see them come together is within the settlement itself. The large plots of both the Northern and Southern Zones may best be viewed as private plots or 'small-holdings' within which a number of subsistence activities were carried out by family units. Having said this, the Northern and Southern Zones do differ from one another. The Northern Zone comprises larger, less formal, plots with apparent tracks or droveways that lead northward. It is possible that the character of this part of the settlement was one primarily of paddocks, perhaps associated with the movement and grazing of livestock within the adjacent in-fields. The insect and plant evidence (Vol. 2, Sections 4.6 and 4.7.1) presents an overall picture of a settlement with open areas supporting vegetation such as nettles between timber buildings. Grassland grazed by domestic animals seems to have formed the immediate hinterland to the settlement. The soil micromorphology evidence from the Period 2 buried soils included charred dung-rich organic matter probably derived from animals kept in yards or pounds and stabling waste from byres as well as domestic rubbish within the settlement centre (Vol. 2, Section 4.9).

The plots of the Southern Zone appear less paddock-like and contain evidence of subdivision suggestive of the presence of vegetable gardens alongside animal pens and perhaps small paddocks. The animal bone assemblage records the presence of 'farmyard animals' such as chickens, pigs and goats (Vol. 2, Section 4.2) that are presumed to have been held in these sub-enclosures. There is some evidence from the seeds for some possible garden plants: peas, flax, coriander, dill, opium poppy. There is also evidence for fruit trees, although whether they were in orchards or hedgerows is unknown. Pigs, having little use other than as a source of meat, were all killed on reaching their optimum weight, that is between the ages of one and two to three years. The incidence of articulated neonatal and very juvenile remains are interpreted as the casualties of on-site breeding and serves to indicate that pigs were kept within the domestic settlement areas. Like the sheep, the pig stock was not improved until the mid 2nd century but whether or not this late development constitutes expanding pig husbandry for commercial markets as part of an overall trend of increased production is not determined. The diversity of activity within these plots, including processing and/or manufacturing, makes a specialist market gardening role unlikely, as does the plots' exposed positions along the terrace edge. However, the Northern Zone has yielded the slightest of evidence for the cultivation of exotic produce in the form of a single grape pollen grain from the Area R watercourse fills (Greig, Vol. 2, Section 4.8).

In summary, the relatively large settlement plots attest to a rural, rather than urban, existence practised by most, if not all, of the population. Thus, Heybridge may have functioned more as a village, of which its occupants were primarily farmers who maintained a small number of domesticated livestock, perhaps undertook small-scale crop processing and cultivated 'kitchen gardens' within their own plots and also undertook both arable and pastoral farming within its hinterland. The question of ownership of both land and agricultural produce is considered in Chapter 5.

Exploitation of natural resources

While a mixture of arable and pastoral agriculture undoubtedly provided Heybridge with a basic staple provision, this was supplemented at a subsistence level through the exploitation of the natural resources of its hinterland. Such resources were not, of course, restricted to foodstuffs, but extended to minerals and building materials. Alongside exploitation, we should perhaps also assume management of a resource undertaken to ensure sustainability; although, as can be seen from woodland exploitation, this was not always the case.

Marine exploitation

An obvious hinterland zone for exploitation was that of river, estuary and coast — all within immediate reach of the settlement. However, obvious as this zone may seem as a food source (*i.e.* fish and shellfish), it is interesting to note the variable and generally lower use of this resource than may be first expected. In part, this is due to the poor survival and recovery of items such as fish bones, although for the shellfish this is a less satisfactory explanation. The rivers and estuary facilitated inshore marine fishing and exploitation of migratory species in freshwater; flatfish, especially plaice and flounder, were the most common catch (Locker, Vol. 2, Section 4.3). These fish were probably caught on lines (a fish-hook was recovered during the excavations) and in shoreline traps in the Blackwater Estuary and show a continuity of fishing practice between the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. This view of continuity of fishing practice is in contrast to the exploitation of oysters. The consumption of oysters or, for that matter, any form of shellfish was negligible for the Late Iron Age, as is also the case nationally. Such foodstuffs were not exploited at Heybridge until the Roman period, with dumps of oyster, mussel and occasional whelk shells being most numerous in the mid to later Roman periods (Winder, Vol. 2, Section 4.4). Even then, it is the present authors' view that the overall quantity of shellfish, most noticeably oyster, was lower than might have been anticipated considering the close proximity of the settlement to their source. The incidence of appreciable dumps or accumulation of oyster shell was low across the excavated settlement area, as was the general 'background' scatter of this material.

Various scenarios accounting for this perceived paucity of oyster have been generated, the most relevant to this discussion of economy being that they may have been actively farmed and traded elsewhere — most likely to Colchester, Chelmsford or London. This has led to further speculation regarding exploitation rights to the coastal hinterland being held by Colchester rather than Heybridge — the former being an urban centre and by far the greater consumer of oysters. However, on balance, is seems that shellfish simply did not form a very significant part of the diet of the population of Heybridge, even during the Roman period. Rippon has observed that Romano-British farm complexes in the North Somerset Levels made almost no use of local wetland food resources (*i.e.* fish, shellfish or wildfowl) (2000, 57) and speculates that this might attest to the efficiency of the agricultural system (Rippon 2000, 101, citing Grant 1989, 144). The likely social implication of this lack of marine exploitation is further discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, the possible restricted religious/ritual connotation and use of oysters is considered in Chapter 6.

Hunting and foraging

The animal bone record evidences the hunting of deer (Johnstone and Albarella, Vol. 2, Section 4.2) within the hinterland interior. Hunting, particularly of wildfowl such as duck and possibly goose, would have extended into the saltmarsh. Amongst the dog remains were a few examples of large animals over 600mm at the shoulder that might have been used for hunting, and the spearheads recovered from the site may also have been used for hunting rather defence (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.12). Exploitation of the natural resources inland can perhaps also be assumed to have extended to the foraging of fruits, fungi and other wild plants.

Minerals

Judging by the mineral resource requirements of the initial settlement remodelling episode, and to a lesser extent of subsequent resurfacing activity, sand and gravel were recognised resources. Although the location of the Late Iron Age and early Roman gravel pits remain unknown, extraction was clearly undertaken on a *massive* scale. As a high bulk/low value commodity, extraction was undertaken only to supply the needs of the settlement itself — and seemingly restricted to specific large-scale (*i.e.* public/communal) works rather than domestic ventures of individuals (*e.g.* floors or small yards/working areas). Thus, gravel extraction may also be seen as an aspect of the subsistence economy and did not constitute a tradable commodity in a region where supply was abundant and readily available.

Clay was also valued and utilised as a building material (*e.g.* well-linings, capping deposits, foundation trench fills, daub), and also as a malleable medium utilised in craft manufacture (*e.g.* loomweights, pottery). Like gravel, its use appears to have been localised though, in theory, it could have been traded out in the form of finished items (*e.g.* pottery). Clearly a versatile material in widespread use throughout the life of the settlement, its importance as a subsistence material should not be underestimated.

Woodland

It is presumed that mixed deciduous woods and copses were present across the settlement hinterland. These may well have had ancient origins although, as with the ownership of cultivated land, it is far from clear who had access and ownership to this resource. In addition, we can only presume the existence and nature of the obligations of maintenance and protection that accompanied ownership or guardianship.

Given the huge amount of woodland resources required to construct a roundhouse, or for that matter a strip-building, it is apparent that systems of woodland management were practised in the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. However, the changing nature of settlements and the ever increasing fuel demands of domestic and manufacturing activity within them inevitably led to over exploitation and depletion in the resources of slow-grown timber such as ancient oak. The evidence of the wood-lined wells at Elms Farm indicates that this had already happened by the mid Roman period, the well linings themselves being constructed of narrow, fast-grown oak, the earliest of them utilising timber felled in *c.* AD 135–6 (Vol. 2, Section 5.1).

Salt production
Although entirely residual from the point of salt extraction, salt briquetage was commonly present in Late Iron Age and early Roman features (*cf.* Major, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.7) and reflects the widespread location of this salt extraction activity along much of the Essex coastline and estuaries. The occurrence of briquetage away from its point of use, and on settlement sites often far removed from the coast, is still an issue that has not been adequately explained (*e.g.* Rippon 2000, 102). Heybridge was, of course, in close proximity to this production; the nearest known red hills were at Osea Road and near Slough House Farm some 3–3.5km distant (Fawn *et al.* 1990, 61 — RH184 and 185) with many more extending along the northern edge of the Blackwater Estuary (Fawn *et al.* 1990, 60–1).

Salt was a basic commodity most importantly required for preserving foodstuffs as well as general culinary purpose. Most notable is its use in salting butter, cheese and meat which can comprise as much as 10% of the weight of the product (van den Broeke 1995, 153). Elsewhere, the salting of a single pig is reckoned to require a minimum of 12.5kg of salt (Lane and Morris 2001, 461). As noted above the butchery evidence would suggest the curing of meat through brining and cold-smoking (Vol. 2, 4.2).

Given the likely requirements of a substantial settlement such as Heybridge, a tangible link with the nearby production sites is therefore to be expected. Furthermore, it is also possible that Heybridge had a role as a point of distribution of this commodity. The relationship between producer and consumer is not clear, and it remains possible that salt production was a seasonal activity undertaken by Heybridge occupants themselves; particularly as no significant occupation sites have yet been found in close conjunction with Essex salterns. Lane and Morris conclude, in their very thorough survey of saltmaking, that seasonal occupation was undertaken by agriculturalists in the Fenland (2001, 403). At Heybridge, briquetage was recovered as debris in domestic rubbish pits across the settlement area. However, a significant proportion had been reused as a foundation material in Roman-period hearths and drying floors.

Perhaps salt briquetage had a generally accepted secondary use as a building material once it was no longer functional in salt recovery. Although essentially reused or residual as found, the significance of the briquetage assemblage should not be underestimated. Salt, because of its preserving qualities, must have been a valued commodity that was thus traded inland. Judging from the high incidence of red hills along the Essex coast, salt, along with wheat, may have been one of the more plausible sources of Trinovantian wealth in the Late Iron Age and perhaps early Roman periods.

Craft and manufacture
(Table 4.3)
As with almost all 'small towns' Heybridge possessed a range of manufacturing activities, as perhaps might be expected, to meet the basic requirements of a substantial settlement and its population. The key to determining the relative importance of such activities to the settlement economy is much the same as for agriculture: a matter of subsistence versus surplus.

Clearly, factors of differential survival and recovery will have biased the evidence. The relative paucity of evidence for the manufacture of artefacts using organic materials such as bone, leather and wood is probably a matter of poor survival. The limited range of wooden and leather artefacts derives only from well deposits. The large assemblage of iron tools (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10) contributes to the picture of a wide range of manufacturing activities being practised within the settlement. However, the specific use of many of these implements remains unknown and may well have had either singular or multiple purpose — a sharp cutting knife, for instance, could have been used to carve wood, cut leather or be a domestic table knife. Indeed, knives and blades comprise the two largest categories of tool type (a combined total of 37% of the assemblage), although chisels and punches are also particularly prevalent. As such, it is best to regard these tools as being representative of the general location, magnitude and likely range of craft and manufacturing activities being practised within the settlement.

It should also be borne in mind that iron tools may not necessarily be deposited anywhere near their place of use nor in associated circumstances; votive deposition of 'tools' in the temple precinct is a very obvious example (Chapter 6). Consideration of numbers of tools per settlement zone (particularly if the temple precinct material is excluded on the grounds of being most obviously votive rather than functional) reveals the highest incidence to be across the Southern Zone (Table 4.3).

However, the various craft occupations are not only represented by iron tools. Where manifest in the archaeological record in other ways, the major activities are discussed below with a view to assessing their location, scale and economic importance through the Late Iron Age and Roman periods.

Metalworking (iron, copper alloy, silver, gold and lead)
Metalworking was an activity that is well represented in the archaeological record (Vol. 2, Sections 3.7.10.3 and 5.3). A range of debris that includes litharge, crucibles, moulds, cast waste, slag, hammerscale, off-cuts and part-finished items attests to the production of both iron and copper-alloy artefacts from the Late Iron Age onwards with lead in increasing use throughout the Roman period. In addition a number of kilns, ovens and/or hearths, mostly of uncertain function, may have been associated with this metalworking activity.

As might be expected in a region that has no significant metallic ore resources (bar the possible use of iron pan), there is no evidence for the primary working of metals at Heybridge. All metalworking is likely to have been of a secondary nature, either the casting or forging of objects. The large iron bloom (SF2676) represents the raw material of the metalworker, as do two smaller possible blooms (Vol. 2, Section 5.3). This was probably the state in which much, if not all, of the iron arrived at the

Zone	No. of tools	% of tools
Northern	39	23%
Central	38	22%
(Temple)	27	16%
Southern	64	37%
Hinterland	4	2%

Table 4.3 Distribution of iron tools across the site

settlement. Judging by a low but consistent incidence of hammerscale, again mostly across the Southern Zone, bloom and perhaps ready-prepared iron bars were presumably forged into items such as tools and nails; an activity attested to by widespread incidence of hammerscale and the presence of metalworking tools such as swages, hammers and anvils (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.2). No evidence of the casting of iron objects has been identified. Clearly, iron was the most important medium for utilitarian objects such as tools and thus a degree of self-sufficiency of production and supply within the settlement is to be expected. However, Dungworth (Vol. 2, Section 5.3) has concluded that ironworking is unlikely to have formed a significant part of the local economy.

Like iron, copper alloy was perhaps traded into the settlement in bar form, melted in crucibles within small furnaces and cast into a range of small objects. While there is a general spread of this material across the plots of the southern outer zone, largely as debris within domestic rubbish pits, one likely working area has been identified in Area N. Here, a number of small hearths, associated pits and debris were located alongside strip Building 30 or 31, at what would have been the front of the plot (Fig. 3.3, Open Area 28). These features show that mid 1st century copper-alloy casting was a small-scale activity undertaken within the domestic 'homestead' plots of the settlement — rather than in a separate and designated area of metalwork specialisation. The objects produced were probably often less functional and more ornamental than those wrought of iron. It has been suggested that the clay moulds were perhaps used to produce box fittings (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.3) while a small number of Roman brooches may also have been locally made (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.1). However, judging from the relatively large number of imported and non-local brooches that arrived at Heybridge throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, such production was fairly insignificant. It remains possible that all or some of the copper-alloy casting activity at Heybridge represents only the recycling of obsolete artefacts with the majority of such goods being 'imported'.

Although present, evidence for the working of precious metals is slight. Silver traces were found in a single crucible (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.3.1), while three fragments of litharge cakes (only one stratified; Roman) indicate the refining of silver on site. The working of gold is directly attested by a small bar from which off-cuts have been made (SF6565) (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.3.1) and traces in a crucible. Although the gold bar is an unstratified find, from unexcavated Area A3, it signifies the presence of a high-status manufacturing activity, quite possibly in the pre-conquest period settlement. Given the high value of the material and very probable careful reuse of scrap, such activity is always likely to be small scale and difficult to locate within a settlement. Both the gold and silver traces in the crucibles occur alongside copper alloy and it seems likely that they were used in the same small-scale Late Iron Age/early Roman-period production of personal items.

Lead working was largely confined to the mid and, particularly, late Roman periods. Lead waste, predominantly in the form of puddles or dribbles, but also including off-cuts and casting waste, was scattered across the settlement. Being easily melted, it is likely that a proportion of this assemblage was not the result of lead working but of accidental or incidental heating. The liquid nature of melted lead, resulting in many splashes and droplets, may also result in the disproportionate representation of apparent lead working activity in the archaeological record. However, lead still enjoyed a general level of use within the settlement, probably being cast into steelyard weights (a class of artefact that is numerous at Heybridge; Vol. 2, Section 3.7.9) but also perhaps occasionally employed as a soldering agent and in the repair of pottery vessels. It is likely that lead was continually being recycled and that the sudden peak in its incidence in the late Roman period may be an expression of this.

In the absence of large numbers of furnaces, dumps of fuel ash and extensive assemblages of artefacts associated with forging and casting activities, it seems that Heybridge did not possess a metalworking specialism. The limited range and size of resultant artefacts suggests relatively small-scale production of functional items such as tools and small personal items of jewellery. Even where working areas have been tentatively identified, there appears to have been no great intensity to this activity. If such people as professional metalworkers were present at Heybridge, it is likely that they were individual specialists producing functional necessities for the population of the settlement and its hinterland. Production was clearly small-scale and perhaps intermittent. The fact that metalworking debris was spread across settlement zones, and that no one particular production centre can be identified, suggests that a number of its occupants possessed metalworking skills and that these were perhaps practised as a supplementary activity to the mainstay of farming.

Pottery production

Although it is readily apparent that Heybridge was supplied with pottery from external sources (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.1.4), it is speculated that the vast majority of settlement needs were met by local production. The production of pottery at Heybridge is only directly evidenced for the late 2nd and late 3rd centuries. However, the Area L, N and W kilns (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.1) and their associated wasters may constitute only the *surviving* vestiges of this activity. Given the quantity and composition of Late Iron Age and Roman ceramics, local supply was evidently constant. It is likely that further kilns lay beyond the excavated areas, particularly in view of the fact that this production was generally located on or just beyond the settlement peripheries. Alternatively, many kiln sites, particularly those of an earlier date, may have been less substantial and thus had not survived or else simply went undetected in the stripped, but unexcavated, parts of the site.

Taken at face value, the small number, limited capacity and dispersed locations of the recorded kilns suggest low-level pottery production. This is indicative of a sporadic or seasonal manufacturing activity, probably undertaken as a side-line by settlement occupants with a view to satisfying the domestic requirement of the immediate community. Further consideration of the implication of these kilns to our understanding of local production and supply is presented in Volume 2 (Section 3.2.4.1). It should be noted that production could be extremely localised and not restricted to the more substantial settlements; Roman-period kilns have been found in surrounding minor rural settlements such as Hill Farm, Tolleshunt d'Arcy (Adkins 1984, 135).

Boneworking (including horn and antler)
Although it may reasonably be assumed that the manufacture of bone artefacts such as hairpins, needles, awls and knife handles was undertaken as a craft activity on site, the evidence is very sparse. Analysis of the animal bone assemblage has revealed little evidence of specialist use, although there are some hints of the utilisation of sheep horn and two instances of sawn horse bone, along with a possible rough-out piece SF6825 (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.4). The only appreciable 'concentration' of this material was in pit 4142, in Area K, which yielded the rough-out and three further cut pieces. The retrieved quantity of worked bone objects is also remarkably low considering the extensive nature of the excavations, amounting to only around fifty items (not including those from burials). The assemblage is dominated by hairpins (totalling twenty-eight), which could conceivably have been locally produced. The utilisation of deer antler and bone appears to be a latest Roman/early Saxon phenomenon at Heybridge. Antler working waste was principally retrieved from deposits in the subsidence hollow over early Saxon pit 14529 (Group 722 in Open Area 60), although no likely end-products have been identified.

Butchery
While the primary butchery of cattle, that is the reduction of a slaughtered animal to a carcass, has been widely noted at Elms Farm (Vol. 2, Section 4.2), this was not undertaken on an industrial scale. Thus, Heybridge was clearly a place of domestic consumption. While it no doubt supplied cattle to other markets such as Colchester, processing was not undertaken on site; livestock were presumably taken elsewhere on the hoof. The presence of deposits of highly and systematically fragmented bone, commonly referred to as 'soup kitchen deposits', infer that fat extraction through boiling was carried out. It is speculated that this intensive extraction was undertaken for craft or semi-industrial purposes — although, perhaps the pure fats obtained were used in oil lamps. It is presumed that some of the salt consumption on site, as evidenced by the briquetage waste, was used for preserving meat.

Carpentry
The timber well-linings themselves attested to proficient, though utilitarian, carpentry skills. The timbers bear the marks of the carpenter's tools, many of which are present in the iron tool assemblage (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10.2), including chisels, saws, gouges, carpenters dogs and the ubiquitous nail (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.6). While the construction and maintenance of timber buildings and other structures may have been the principal preoccupation of those with carpentry skills, the production of domestic furniture and functional items such as the 'child's sword'/spatula (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.13.8, No. 165) may have been produced within the settlement. The lathe-turned knob (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.13.8, No. 167) may well be from an imported piece of furniture and suggests that on-site craft woodworking was essentially basic and mundane.

Textile production
Elms Farm produced a large assemblage of artefacts used in all stages of textile processing, from the initial combing of the wool, to the production of sewn clothing. The six woolcomb fragments from the site form one of the largest assemblages of such objects in the country. However, the most noticeable components of the assemblage are the spindlewhorls, a total of eighty-four, and the triangular loomweights, of which there were fragments from over 140 examples. Over half the spindlewhorls and loomweights came from Period 2 contexts, and it is clear that the production of woven textiles must have been a major occupation during this period, continuing at least into the early part of the Roman period. Only Areas E, F and I produced woolcombs (these are adjoining areas lying to the west of Road 1), suggesting that this area may have been particularly associated with primary wool processing. The spindlewhorls and loomweights largely came from the southern zone of the site, and it is presumed that spinning and weaving was taking place there. The overall impression is of a site that may have been producing wool and cloth for export as well as internal use.

After Period 2, the evidence is more difficult to interpret. The introduction of the horizontal loom to Britain by the Romans meant that loomweights were no longer needed, and all triangular loomweights from contexts after about AD 120 should be residual. However, the probable total of four spindlewhorls of mid to latest Roman date would suggest a decrease in spinning activity. An examination of the other textile implements from dated contexts reinforces the impression of a drop in textile-production activities at Elms Farm after Period 3. In contrast needles are particularly common at Elms Farm in Period 3 contexts, but not in Period 2 contexts. If the relative lack of needles in Period 2 is genuine, it suggests that either much of the textile being produced during Period 2 was destined for sale as cloth, rather than being made into clothes on site, or that tailoring of garments was minimal. The increased incidence of needles in Period 3 may denote a change in emphasis, with increased production of finished clothing on site.

Leatherworking
The leather is restricted to shoe fragments and off-cuts and need not represent more than repairing activity (*i.e.* cobbling) (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.8). Preparation of animal hides on any significant scale would have been a specialist activity, requiring a range of structures (especially tanning pits) and tools that were not identified within the excavated areas of the settlement. So, a restricted leatherworking 'repertoire' is assumed. Many of the iron tools (knives, punches, awls) could quite easily have been used for leatherworking (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.10).

Discussion
The major craft activities have been discussed above, but there remains a whole host of less tangible processes, both domestic and potentially otherwise that are likely to have been carried out within the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement. One such notable activity that is visible, is cheese-making. A significant pastoral aspect to the economy has been proposed both on the evidence of animal bone and the likely land use of the adjacent saltmarsh and low-lying pasture. Given the presence of substantial sheep populations, particularly in the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods, this could well have included a dairying element. Indeed, Heybridge's close proximity to, and postulated association with, salt manufacturing sites would have been particularly useful;

as previously noted, both butter and cheese-making can require significant quantities of salt. Thus, it is no great surprise that cheese presses are present within the ceramic assemblage. Although only totalling six items, this assemblage is, in fact, a relatively large one judging by published assemblages from elsewhere (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.9) and may represent the surviving vestiges of a significant economic activity that mainly utilised wooden tools and equipment. It may be pertinent that far more examples of vessels thought to be cheese presses come from the Fens than from any other area of Britain (Rippon 2000, 77). This may suggest that Heybridge's exploitation of the saltmarsh was similar to that of the Fen-edge settlements of East Anglia.

While it is relatively easy to identify the range of craft or manufacturing, either by direct or indirect means, it is far more difficult to decide which were undertaken at a subsistence level of production and which at an increased volume that we may presume were intended for retail. The latter, particularly where significant output may be demonstrated, may also have a 'specialist' connotation.

Some of the occupation plots of the Southern Zone have similarities with those of other 'small towns' that contained manufacturing activities. One such parallel is the Godfrey's site at Chelmsford where the 2nd-century road frontage strip-buildings have ovens or hearths in close proximity and the rear of the plot is relatively clear (Priddy 1988, 263; Wickenden 1996, Fig. 15). The Godfrey's plot was only *c.* 70m long and it seems that the far longer rear part of the plots at Heybridge facilitated a greater range of agricultural activities in addition to the craft/manufacture ones. As well as illustrating the rather less-urban nature of this area of the settlement, this perhaps emphasises the secondary nature of manufacturing activities and the primacy of agriculture to the livelihoods of its occupants.

Collectively, the relatively low frequency of artefacts and associated structures that are representative of these various craft and manufacturing activities reflects the general diversity and multiplicity of skills that, by necessity, were possessed by a community at this time. A degree of self-sufficiency would have been necessary to such a farming community, although it cannot be discounted that output may have exceeded the practical need of the settlement population.

Trade and exchange
It is debatable whether the early imported commodities of the late 1st century BC and even the early 1st century AD constitute economic transaction taking place between external traders and the population of Heybridge. As discussed elsewhere (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.1.4), restricted supply, range and often high-status or specialised use of imported pottery (*e.g.* funerary) suggest non-economic processes of exchange and distribution at work.

Although the potential of Heybridge as a continental port and even a trading entrepôt has already been downplayed during consideration of site status, it remains evident that imported material did arrive at the settlement. Given its location at the head of a large and accessible estuary, at least some of this trade is likely to have been direct. As Sealey points out, the coastline of Essex is long and its interior penetrated by a number of suitable estuaries and rivers (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.31). It is unlikely that there were any 'Trinovantian ports', as such, during the Late Iron Age. Instead, cargoes were probably of a restricted nature and size that allowed their offloading at any number of convenient places of the kind of harbours, beaches and hards discussed by McGrail (1990a, 46–7). As well as being a local centre, Heybridge no doubt benefited from its fortuitous location at the head of the Blackwater Estuary and alongside the Chelmer. As such, a wide range of commodities may have arrived and departed, although it is often only the obvious foreign imports that can be recognised easily in the earlier settlement. Apart from the pottery, one such class of artefact is the brooches (Crummy, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.1). As evidenced by Gaulish Knotenfibeln, these arrived at Heybridge from the later 1st century BC onward. While Crummy notes that the quantity of pre-conquest brooches is typical for south-east England, these are not present in such numbers as to suggest a direct continental supply — thus reinforcing the present view of Heybridge not being a port or trading entrepôt in this period.

It may be argued that there was, in fact, little commercial *trade* between south-east England and the continent until the conquest. The appearance of foreign imports, such as amphorae and other ceramics, at Heybridge and across Essex and Hertfordshire, could alternatively be interpreted as either diplomatic gifts or as personal possessions and acquisitions (Creighton 2000). It is perhaps possible that the economic function of pre-conquest Heybridge was relatively localised and that this exotic material should be understood more in terms of restricted distribution for social and political reasons. This is pursued further in the following section on 'Society and Politics' (Chapter 5). It may be further posited that some basic commodities were also controlled in a similar way. Wheat and salt are two such candidates, as has been speculated earlier.

Participation in a market economy came with the conquest. While contact with the Roman world and receipt of some of its goods by the elite has already been shown to have occurred in the Late Iron Age, Romanisation of the rest of society was perhaps a slower and less startling process. The take up of Romanised pottery was not immediate and wholesale, but took a generation or so with grog-tempered vessels ceasing to be produced until the AD 70s and not finally passing out of use until *c.* AD 80 (Vol. 2, Section 3.2). Similarly, the flow of continental imports actually seems to have reduced over this same period as compared to the early 1st century, although this may be due to the artificial boost of 'diplomatic supply' coming to an end at the conquest. The following reduced rate of supply is thus perhaps best viewed as the normal market supply for that time. This suggests that the Romanised versions of such functional items were adopted as much due to external dynamics forcing change as to a particular desire on the part of the population at Heybridge to embrace things Roman.

Having drawn attention to the gradual changes in economy and supply that took place in the later 1st century, it is clear that Heybridge did participate in this emergent market economy. With wheat, and perhaps salt, posited to be a principal export which entered into Roman mercantile/ military distribution rather than control and re- distribution via an elite, the agricultural community had access to a range of external commodities. While many of these are invisible in the archaeological record, some are not.

As mentioned above, all metals would have been acquired from various sources at some distance from Heybridge. Though with little idea of their origin, quantity

of trade, or of the mechanisms governing their transfer and supply, little meaningful discussion is possible. Given the declining status of Heybridge during the Roman period, it is likely that such commodities were acquired from the surrounding market centres at places such as Colchester, Chelmsford or even Kelvedon. Heybridge clearly had good communications by water, though was not so well appointed in relation to the Roman road system. This may not have been so important in the Late Iron Age when the pattern of land communication was more fluid in the landscape and, presumably, a somewhat different pattern of social, political and economic relationships prevailed. But in the Roman settlement pattern, Heybridge was not on a primary road route and suffered economically, becoming a backwater as the Roman period progressed. The location and access of the settlement in relation to the surrounding landscape is further explored in Chapter 8.

While a Roman market economy made a number of commodities more available to Heybridge, it is apparent that this did not necessarily stimulate an increase in the diversity of its own 'domestic' craft activities and their growth into industries. Indeed, the evidence suggests a scaling down of many of the manufacturing activities, though whether this lack of economic expansion was a cause or a result of settlement status decline and physical contraction is a matter of debate.

The population of the settlement was clearly engaged in some form of monetary transaction, at least some of which we can assume was market exchange. Although there is a widespread scatter of low-denomination coinage across the settlement, analysis of loss patterns has not revealed the location of a definite market place where exchange was conducted; instead such transactions could have been fairly casual or have taken place at other markets beyond Heybridge. The large number of lead steelyard weights (Tyrrell, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.1), again spread across the settlement, may have been associated with this market activity. They may be construed as indicating that produce was being bagged to set weights for sale within or beyond the settlement. Alongside an intra-settlement market scenario, we should perhaps envisage that goods were taken elsewhere for sale, either by the producer or a middle-man — particularly high-bulk agricultural produce such as grain.

Although the Late Iron Age coin assemblage suggests a reasonably high settlement status, it is debatable whether or not this can be equated with a degree of economic sophistication. The relatively high number and scattered distribution of low-value coins, and their pronounced wear, does appear to suggest a high frequency of monetary transactions that in turn implies that Heybridge was an early centre of trade. The apparent residuality of coins could, of course, alternatively be interpreted as a product of prolonged circulation.

Although coinage continued to arrive at the settlement throughout the 4th century and perhaps into the 5th, it was not associated markets or fairs that were the cause, but the continued functioning of the temple itself. The late Roman coinage was not found dispersed around the settlement but instead clustered around the vicinity of the temple, or deposited in hoards, indicating that it had lost its role as a means of exchange, becoming instead a symbolic material to be used in votive practices. While economic

transactions may have decreased in line with settlement decline, this is not to say that they were no longer carried out. Instead, it appears that, at least in the countryside, the monetary economy had collapsed and that much exchange had increasingly reverted to kind during the 4th century.

Services

The consideration of the *service* functions of Heybridge as a separate, though often linked, aspect to trade acknowledges that some aspects of the prosperity or well being of a settlement can be more abstract than the generation of wealth through the exchange of commodities. Some services were not directly connected with financial gain, but still may have had an economic benefit. The important religious function of this settlement is perhaps one such service.

In many ways, this postulated service function of the settlement was possibly of principal importance in the Late Iron Age. As argued later (Chapter 5), the early settlement may have constituted a cultural, religious and funerary focus and have possessed the credentials and various facilities (meeting places, shrines, pyre fields and cemeteries) to offer to the wider population. It seems likely that at least some of these services were retained throughout the Roman period. The provision of a large and developed religious complex presumably drew pilgrims into the settlement, as a steady stream of visitors or in mass attendance on certain days of the religious calendar. As has been posited to be the case elsewhere (Woodward and Leach 1993), the temple was possibly associated with a market or fairs that accompanied religious festivals. The enigmatic Area H, directly to the north of the temple precinct (Area J), with its gravel surfaces and elliptical enclosures, may have had such a function. However, a better candidate might be the large 'open space' in front of both Areas J and H. Maintained as such for over 300 years, this surfaced area would perhaps have hosted religious fairs that included a market. Such events, if they indeed occurred, would have provided a regular boost to what was otherwise a subsistence economy. Perhaps some of the craft activities produced surpluses specifically for sale on these occasions — even if only to sell mundane items such as iron tools to occasionally visiting farmers from the wider settlement hinterland and beyond.

Summary

On the whole, the level of both agricultural and manufacturing activities was small-scale and intended to satisfy the basic needs of the family unit and immediate settlement community. These activities help define settlement character as being one of basic self-sufficiency, supplemented by local, regional and long-distance imports, much of which may have been indirect.

Whether a substantial settlement such as Heybridge could have managed to continue to exist without some form of output in the form of surplus agricultural produce or manufactured goods is debatable. Although difficult to evaluate, the economic importance of cereal cultivation, animal husbandry and perhaps small-scale local trade in metalwork and pottery should not be underestimated. Similar manufacturing activity and possibly similar animal husbandry/consumption can be observed at Braintree (Drury 1976; Perring and Pitts forthcoming).

Chapter 5. Social and Political Structure

I. Introduction

While it is relatively easy to infer the importance of Heybridge as a whole, it is more difficult to determine the social and political dynamics that were the driving force behind settlement status. Particularly during the Late Iron Age, the fortunes of a community or social group appear to have been invested in the personal prestige and political fortunes of an elite few. It is generally accepted that, following the conquest, these elite were subsumed into the Roman system and accepted a role in the Roman administration of the province and that society in general became increasingly Romanised over a period of time. Against this model of social change, Heybridge should allow us to compare and contrast the nature, speed and degree of Romanisation that took place within a specific Trinovantian community. A critical analysis of the impact and processes of change from Late Iron Age to Roman lifestyle, political situation, and cultural identity is thus attempted.

While it may be demonstrated that the process of Romanisation had already begun long before AD 45, and that it was in many ways a very significant political development, it was probably not a *force* that permeated the whole of the social structure until after the conquest. Even with Roman rule firmly established, the role of Heybridge as a locally important settlement suggests that, in many ways, Late Iron Age society, if not politics, persisted. Indeed, it is argued that the thread of Late Iron Age social cohesion and control was not lost but maintained (via a religio-cultural function) to the very end of the Roman settlement and beyond.

II. Society

Late Iron Age

Prior to a market economy in which entire settlements, principally 'towns', became integrated economic entities, it was probably key individuals, rather than the collective whole that created and maintained importance. This importance, then, was principally derived from political and social prestige. Although no specific individuals can be identified from the archaeological record, it is possible to suggest that there were high-status, and presumably wealthy, individuals present at Heybridge during the Late Iron Age. These people seem to emerge to the fore from the end of the 1st century BC. In the main this has been deduced from the funerary evidence (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2), specifically the imported artefacts used as pyre goods. This material has already been cited as evidence of early high status for the settlement as a whole (Chapter 4) though, more properly, it perhaps infers the status of a relatively small number of individuals resident within it. It has long been recognised that parts of south-east England, and in particular the Trinovantian territory, were Romanised well before the conquest (*e.g.* Haselgrove 1987). Previous evidence for this has generally come from graves, contexts notorious for the special problems posed

by the very fact of the deliberate nature of their deposition and the conspicuous display involved. Creighton (2000) has recently argued that in south-east England during the years between Julius Caesar and Claudius, Roman political strategies, as much as Roman material culture, were being consciously adopted and adapted by the powerful in British society.

These elite individuals of Late Iron Age society clearly had access to 'exotic' commodities such as wine and fine ceramics (perhaps tableware). Although, to explain how they came to acquire them in terms of possessing the wealth to purchase traded goods is perhaps too simplistic. Further deliberation of the likely mechanisms by which such material arrived at Heybridge is instructive as to the nature of political contact with the Roman world, political relations with neighbouring tribes and the 'top down' process of Romanisation of Trinovantian society. The issue of trade has already been addressed in Chapter 4, but there are two further acquisition scenarios that are of relevance here:

- *Diplomatic gifts*: foreign (principally Roman?) envoys visited the Trinovantian leaders on diplomatic missions, bringing with them gifts of luxury items including consumables such as wine. Such missions need not have been direct to Heybridge, but perhaps instead visiting the principal political centre at Camulodunum. A local leader in attendance may have received some of this material directly or else as part of a symbolic redistribution by the king/chief (Tasciovanus, then Cunobelin) to his loyal supporters or sub-leaders;

- *Personal possessions*: objects were acquired by individuals visiting the continent (also on diplomatic missions?) and brought back on their return. Whether some or all of such material remained in their possession is unclear, but singularly unusual items of distant origin may be examples of this (*e.g.* the red pompeian platter and mortarium, both from Italy, in pyre debris deposit 15417, Biddulph and Compton, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.8).

Either way, such scenarios infer that Trinovantian contact with the Roman world, even Rome itself, was already highly developed by the beginning of the 1st century AD. It is notable that the peak of the site's consumption of wine (or, more strictly, of its receipt of wine amphorae) fell into this pre-conquest period — seemingly marking the time of greatest diplomatic contact.

A major source of imports was Gaul, both for pottery and items such as brooches. Given its proximity just across the Channel, this is perhaps to be expected. However, this may also be a reflection of political and social affiliations with Gallic tribes. Much of the early knowledge of the Roman world was probably derived second-hand via Gaul. It is possible that, at first, the southern British elite imitated the Romanised lifestyle of the Gauls. Perhaps we should be careful in assigning a purely Roman social and political influence on the

development of Late Iron Age society and, instead, think along the lines of *Gallo-Roman* influence.

Given Heybridge's close proximity both to the sea and to Camulodunum, at this time the principal political and social/cultural centre of the Trinovantes, it is difficult to determine exactly how its elite residents came to acquire their exotic imported goods. Did these commodities reach the settlement directly, or via Camulodunum? Being a settlement of secondary political importance, we might imagine that this material arrived through the mechanism of distribution of goods and patronage, perhaps from Tasciovanus or Cunobelin himself. The fact that the latter depicted ships upon his coinage is a clear indication of the social and political kudos that was to be had from being able to acquire imported goods. Whether or not these coins depict Cunobelin's own or, at least, British ships, as opposed to Roman merchant ships, has been debated elsewhere (McGrail 1990a, 1990b; Marsden 1990). However, it suffices here to say that whatever the case, Cunobelin was eager to advertise that he was in contact with the continent and could acquire exotic commodities.

At least a proportion of these imports was clearly used and consumed within the settlement. A closer examination of the imported commodities therefore gives useful insights into the elite society resident as Heybridge. The amphorae, in particular, are instructive as to the kinds of commodities that were acquired and consumed: wine or *fructum*, olive oil, fish sauces (*garum, muria, alec*) and salted fish in *salazones*. Although we cannot be certain that these were used in a Roman fashion, they strongly imply a desire by the Trinovantian elite to assume Roman habits. If the scenario of individuals having been resident abroad for a time (*e.g.* as 'hostages') is accepted, then it is likely that returnees may have considered themselves more Roman than British in many respects. Having spent a prolonged period of time on the continent, in Gaul or perhaps even in Italy, they may have acquired a correspondingly foreign set of culinary tastes/ preferences. Thus, Heybridge may have been home to an individual or family of some prestige who, having returned from the continent, continued to practise and maintain some semblance of a Roman lifestyle. Whether this was dictated by acquired habit, or by the wish to emphasise their 'specialness' and elite position in society, can only be speculated.

However, the presence of wine amphorae and exotic tableware suggests that the elite had introduced elements of refined Roman culture into the already well-established and important social activities of feasting and drinking. Such events, no doubt including births, marriages, alliances and funerals, had always possessed a domestic political and social function and provided an opportunity for display and conspicuous consumption. The hosting elite thus used Romanised material at such events to advertise and emphasise their social and political prestige. The presence of limited numbers of horses within the Late Iron Age settlement may add to the impression of an elite presence.

That the fortunes of a settlement and its community were closely allied with those of an individual or a predominant, possibly ruling, family is perhaps evident in the ceramic supply to the site. As well as a decline in the numbers of wine amphorae reaching Heybridge, the supply of Gallo-Belgic wares also decreased during the course of the first half of the 1st century AD. In terms of the acquisition scenarios presented above, this may equate with a cooling of diplomatic contact, the lessening of an individual's political prestige, or even their death.

It is against this background of Romanisation of the elite that the reasons for Heybridge's sudden pre-conquest development may be understood. The most powerful indication of the desire to embrace Rome and to reap the anticipated benefits of enhanced wealth and power, is the remodelling of the settlement itself. Although perhaps slightly later, the development of Late Iron Age Verlamion into Roman Verulamium is regarded by some as the result of an indigenous initiative by a pro-Roman elite (Haselgrove and Millett 1997, 294). It also raises the question as to whether the construction of a proto-town at Heybridge by the local Trinovantian elite suggests that they hoped that more of the benefits of Rome would be invested here on the impending conquest.

Politically, and perhaps therefore socially, it appears that the Trinovantes looked toward the continent rather than to the neighbouring territories — perhaps with the exception of that of the Catuvellauni. Brooches imported from the continent in the later 1st century BC and early 1st century AD were probably only worn by the upper ranks of society as an expression of status. These are present at Elms Farm while native, British-made, brooches are few. The occurrence of a coin of the Remi (Hobbs, Vol. 2, Section 3.4) and Paul Sealey's suggestion that the Late Iron Age cremation rite at Heybridge has close affinities with that of the Treveri (Sealey, Vol. 2, Section 3.2.3.1) could be viewed as further evidence of relationships with northern Gallic tribes. Such links are perhaps reminiscent of some of Creighton's discussions concerning shared coin imagery (2000, 123). While these tribal relationships are principally perceived to be between the Treveri and the Commian dynasty, it may even be significant that the early temple complex at Elms Farm has its closest parallel with that at Hayling Island, which itself is deemed to be similar to those in the territory of the Treveri (Creighton 2000, 196). In this context it is also worth noting that the continental chariot yoke fitting (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.8.1) recovered from the site is paralleled by one from Hayling Island (King and Soffe 1998, 41 and fig.2).

The lack of contact with adjacent British tribes is perhaps highlighted by the distribution of coin and imported ceramics that serve to distinguish Trinovantian and Catuvellaunian territory. The lack of coins of Tasciovanus and Cunobelin and of Dressel 1 amphorae in Icenian territory to the north suggests that these tribes had rather different political outlooks. While the Trinovantes embraced Rome, the Iceni seem to have avoided diplomatic contact and rejected an influx of Roman goods. This anti-Roman stance may have resulted in tension between the two tribes, culminating decades later in the Boudiccan revolt during which the opportunity was perhaps taken to inflict defeat on the Roman-loving Trinovantes as much as on Rome itself.

Lower society
That political power, social prestige and, presumably, wealth was concentrated in the hands of the few is clear. However, the composition and structure of the rest of society is less easily determined, as are the mechanisms by which the whole community was held together.

While we have so far postulated the retention of imported commodities in the hands of an elite few,

consideration of the distribution of continental pottery across the area excavated at Elms Farm may modify this view. Excluding the material derived from known funerary features, continental pottery appears to be scattered across much of the settlement area. This may suggest that what were presumably high-status goods enjoyed a wider distribution down through society. It may be postulated that the mechanism for this was the obligation to redistribute and share wealth throughout a community, clan or tribe as a means of social cohesion. Quite how far this permeated through to the bottom of society is unknown, although some form of distribution throughout *free* society is expected.

Hierarchical structure is generally difficult to identify within Late Iron Age settlement layouts, although Creighton notes the distinction of elite residences at Hodd Hill and Gussage All Saints (2000, 17). In terms of the badly preserved and poorly understood domestic structures at Elms Farm, this remains the case. Even within the remodelled settlement of the immediate pre- and post-conquest period, no elite residence has been identified.

The regular division of land within the settlement (Chapter 3) into rectilinear plots, which have been interpreted as small-holdings each occupied by a family (particularly across the southern zone), suggest that a large part of society had right of tenure or ownership. That these plots survived, largely unchanged, from the mid 1st to 4th centuries is possibly a sign that they were in family ownership, although a tenurial arrangement perpetuated within a static community cannot be discounted. The well-developed agricultural landscape that surrounded Late Iron Age Heybridge and the coincidence of domestic, agricultural and manufacturing activities within the 'family small holdings' (see Chapter 4) attest to the majority of the settlement population being primarily farmers practising craft specialisations intermittently, as the agricultural calendar allowed and necessity dictated.

Communality of daily settlement life could be postulated, although this is perhaps rather too simplistic and even utopian. Alternatively, Heybridge and its hinterland could be regarded as a number of independent farmsteads in very close proximity to one another. Regardless of who owned the occupation plots or enclosures, or for that matter the land comprising the settlement hinterland, the most important issue is perhaps that of ownership of the resultant agricultural produce. As discussed in Chapter 4, cereal is thought to have been the principal produce. Being a staple, it was necessarily the prime commodity to have been appropriated and redistributed by the ruling elite as a means of social control.

It is likely that wheat cultivation was considered something of a Trinovantian speciality and that its importance was enshrined in social and religious observance (Chapter 6). It is perhaps on the control of this foodstuff that the dynasties of Tasciovanus and Cunobelin were founded and wheat thus acknowledged as an important Trinovantian symbol of prosperity and power through portrayal on their coinage. It could be argued that while free society was given a degree of autonomy in land tenure or ownership, the elite, and principally the 'king', exacted tribute in kind. Indeed, the primacy of cereal production in the territories of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni may have been the very thing that attracted Roman interest away from the south coast and around to the more readily accessible south-east. The movement of the Roman army from Gaul to the Rhineland frontier may have created increased demand on supplies — of which wheat would have been the most important. The ability of the major tribes of the south-east to meet this demand may thus have been central to the fostering of political ties by Rome.

Speculation about ownership of produce could be extended into other areas, most relevantly exploitation of natural resources (woodland, salt, clay, hunting, even fishing), animal husbandry and craft and manufacturing production (*e.g.* metalworking, textiles). The mechanisms used to exert control over subsistence activities and production are unknown.

While the extended family probably formed the basic unit of society, individuals, families and perhaps wider groupings (clans?) may have possessed varying social status. Indeed, such standing may have had a wide range of social conventions attached. A degree of social stratification may perhaps be inferred from Heybridge's public and communal areas. As discussed in Chapter 6, the temple complex and its associated areas display varying levels of admittance and participation that may reflect a hierarchy within the social structure.

Although not attested in the archaeological record at Elms Farm, the presence of a slave class within Late Iron Age society can perhaps be speculated. Whether such people were owned in varying numbers by individuals or families throughout free society or generally only by the elite is unknown. However, it is likely that slaves formed a very significant proportion of the workforce and perhaps predominantly undertook much of the day-to-day cultivation of the hinterland. The transition-period settlement remodelling episode must have required a large workforce (see Chapter 3). It is difficult to see such communal ventures, paralleling the creation of dyke systems around oppida (*e.g.* Camulodunum), which would seriously disrupt day-to-day life, being undertaken willingly by a free society. Thus, perhaps a significant slave class could be drawn upon from the settlement and its hinterland to undertake this labour. In any event, whether free or slave labour was either employed or impelled, this episode serves to show that a small minority had the necessary level of social control to carry it out.

Roman

If the grand scale of the transition-period remodelling episode is taken as a high point in the development of the settlement and of the community in residence, then Heybridge may be perceived to have been in decline as soon as Roman government and administration were imposed across south-east England. As has been made clear earlier (Chapters 3 and 4), despite this early *floriut*, the settlement was not taken into the Roman town infrastructure. Instead, Camulodunum was given official confirmation as the civitas capital of the Trinovantes and retained as a cult centre, being incorporated into the colonia of Colchester.

It is possible that the failure of Heybridge to become a centre of enhanced political importance, with the status of a town, led to the departure of some or all of its elite residents. Suddenly marginalised by Camulodunum's rise in status and the establishment of further towns that instantly overshadowed the under-developed Heybridge

(*e.g.* Colchester and Kelvedon), elite persons may have been compelled to reside in these new centres. With the old systems of tribal and clan allegiance, patronage and control of resources threatened by an imposed Roman administration and emergent market economy, the old Late Iron Age elite were perhaps forced to renegotiate their roles and relationships if they were to maintain their position at the top of the social hierarchy. It is likely that many were encouraged, and indeed opted, to join the administration. Roman government was therefore largely grafted onto a pre-existing system of social control and cohesion while the elite assumed roles as local government officials that perpetuated their elevated positions in society; albeit now somewhat revised. While these rejuvenated elite may have maintained a close association with their 'homelands', it is likely that they would have needed to taken up residence in the new Roman centres from which local government was operated. The arrested development, stagnation and early decline of Heybridge, as presented in Chapters 3 and 4, may have been exacerbated by the departure of at least some wealthy and influential members of the community, leaving behind a less-stratified resident agricultural population.

Indigenous society was already changing prior to the conquest and had been for as much as 200 years previously (Creighton 2000, chapter 1). As such, there was no startling change in direction post-AD 43; in the main, ongoing social evolution continued throughout the remainder of the 1st century and into the 2nd.

The impression from the archaeological record, with its ever-increasing range, quantity and distribution of Roman, Roman-style and Romanised commodities across the settlement, is that society in general was rapidly able to acquire such material. We no longer perceive marked exclusivity of ownership and use, nor can we identify clear differences based upon comparison of the quantity of material possessions from one domestic plot to another in any given period. The latter is perhaps problematical because no one threw their wealth away — at least not the kind of exotic or valuable durables that could indicate such differences. The vast majority of the cultural material was discarded as worthless waste by both the elite and lowly, the rich and poor, alike. With the added complication of recycling and disposal practices such as middening (prolonged accumulation, communal use, the vagaries of subsequent re-deposition in pits and levelling dumps, *etc.*) should we even expect to perceive differences?

Returning to a point made earlier, the postulated removal of the elite to the new Roman centres would also have the apparent effect of levelling society — the remaining population being of far more equal social status and wealth. Speculation about the nature of land ownership is equally valid for this period as for the Late Iron Age. Within the settlement, the stability of the layout of occupation plots suggests that little changed and that, whatever the arrangement, the same people and their descendants remained in occupation. More problematical is the nature of ownership of the settlement hinterland. Did this community of farmers possess individual ownership of various tracts of land? Was ownership communal and clan-based or did they undertake the work on behalf of a landowner, either on a paid or obligated basis? These issues are not easily addressed, partly due to

the paucity of physical evidence and also because such interpretations either assume society was free and communal or else it was akin to medieval feudalism. Are either of these appropriate to the 1st to 4th centuries AD? However, resolution of such issues would greatly help efforts to understand the reasons for the mid and later Roman-period agricultural expansion discussed in Chapter 4.

What we can say about society in general at Heybridge is that it was very quickly permeated by a moderate level of Romanisation. Whether this was through a deliberate desire to adopt a more 'civilised' lifestyle or due to external dictates changing the range of commodities supplied to the community is difficult to assess; both no doubt played a part. However, overt or aggressive suppression of indigenous cultural identity is clearly not an issue here.

Traditional grog-tempered pottery continued to be widely used in the decades following the conquest, accounting for some *c.* 45–50% of assemblages by weight. It was not until *c.* AD 70 that it passed out of use. As mentioned previously, the static nature of the domestic plots across the southern settlement zone, and of the field system north of the settlement, suggest that domestic and agricultural life continued in the manner already established by the early 1st century AD. Burial practices persisted, albeit with some change in form and location over time (Chapter 7) as did the form of the temple complex (Chapter 6).

The persistence of traditional architectural styles, such as the post-conquest continuance of roundhouses in Area I and the apparent conservatism of temple complex development (devolution?) could be construed as resistance to all-out Romanisation and preservation of indigenous identity and culture. However, this is not borne out by other aspects of the excavated evidence and it is perhaps more appropriate to see limits in Romanisation and urbanism in terms of the limited requirements and aspirations of an essentially agricultural community. It has been noted that decorated pottery is not a significant component of the ceramic assemblage. Together with the evidence for reuse, recycling and relative self-sufficiency there is a sense of a utilitarian mindset in which practicality prevailed over ornament. The paucity of items such as oil lamps and recreational artefacts (Major, Vol. 2, Sections 3.7.4.4 and 3.7.5) adds to this picture and emphasises the non-urban character of the Roman-period settlement. Conversely, the evidence for literacy, predominantly styli (Major; Vol. 2, Section 3.7.9.2) and graffiti, is surprisingly high.

For the most part, the evidence for creeping Romanisation is thinly scattered throughout the archaeological record and its significance is a matter of interpretation. Romanisation may be argued to have a levelling effect on society, making a wider range of goods available to much of the population. Brooches become less of an expression of individual status and seem to be worn by all and sundry following the conquest and hint at a general change in dress taking place. However, it may be argued that the presence of fancy imported continental brooches at Heybridge (Crummy, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.1) argues for the continued presence of individuals of some elevated status.

As concerns culinary habits, an apparent mid 2nd-century shift to the consumption of juvenile, rather

than adult pigs may be a sign of increased or evolving Romanised preference. However, the decline in use of pigs in the late Roman period may suggest that this was short-lived and that a process of de-Romanisation (Saxonisation?) was by now occurring. The oyster, often regarded as the ultimate sign of Romanised eating, is not well-represented. While its primary use in religious/ritual contexts is noted (Chapter 6) and its non-presence as a basic foodstuff accounted for in economic terms (Chapter 4), it remains entirely possible that this was simply a habit that found no favour with Heybridge's indigenous, perhaps conservative, population of agriculturalists.

Lastly, the lack of sophisticated Roman buildings, constructed of brick and tile, heated, plastered, painted and paved (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.6), surely suggests that few enjoyed a truly Romanised lifestyle; perhaps none, if the limited evidence at Heybridge derives from a public building.

Summing up

The overall picture is one of persistence and continuity of the essentially Late Iron Age structure of society throughout the Roman period. However, 'Roman traits' of standardisation and formalisation clearly had an effect on life. Explored further in Chapters 6 and 7, both funerary and religious behaviour are good indicators of these effects of Romanisation on indigenous society. It is likely that this trend permeated and altered other areas of life. However, these same practices reveal that Roman restraint and rationalism was disintegrating by the later Roman period. *Ad hoc* burial and the increase in 'bizarre' structured deposits, coupled with clear signs of decline of the settlement environment (Chapter 3), all indicate fragmentation of a once cohesive society and perhaps the re-emergence of practices, attitudes and beliefs that have more in common with the Late Iron Age. Arriving at this conclusion, one would necessarily have to subscribe to the view that society remained essentially of a Late Iron Age character throughout the Roman period, though many aspects of this are either archaeologically invisible or masked by the veneer of *romanitas*. However, it should be remembered that Roman religious practice also involved sacrifice and offerings had characteristics in common with Late Iron Age practice.

III. The political significance of Heybridge

Late Iron Age

It is clear that Heybridge was 'in the thick of it' during the political and social transformation of Late Iron Age society that was taking place, particularly from the later 1st century BC onwards. Located in close proximity to both Camulodunum and to the east coast of England, the settlement was ideally situated to feel the effects of Romanisation long before Britain was annexed into the empire. That its development parallels, perhaps even pre-empts, that of places such as Verulamion, Braughing and Baldock (and for all we know, Camulodunum itself) frames Heybridge firmly within the Essex/Hertfordshire phenomenon of the early Romanisation of south-eastern England.

This is further emphasised by the testimonies of the coin and imported pottery evidence and by the presence of funerary practices (Chapter 7) that conform to the Aylesford-/Welwyn-style burials across this same geographical area. Although the layout and function of the earliest manifestation of the settlement is far from clear, Heybridge was already established prior to Roman contact with the south-east. The presence of Dressel 1b amphorae signals that Heybridge was 'in the front line' of such contact, and probably a by-product of the Trinovantes becoming clients of Rome in 54 BC. To an extent, as discussed previously, Dressel 1b (or the wine trade?) can be used to plot the extent of Roman diplomatic contact and of Trinovantian political fortunes from this point in time onwards.

Having outlined the hypothesis of Late Iron Age Heybridge as a place of political importance and hence of elevated settlement status (Chapter 4), it is possible to tentatively explore this scenario with reference to the known historico-political evidence. Although it may be unfashionable at present to attempt to identify in the archaeological record specific individuals known from historical texts, in this case there seems to be an obvious candidate. The Late Iron Age king Cunobelin had achieved power by *c.* AD 15 at the latest, and possibly as much as twenty years earlier, overlapping with the latter end of Tasciovanus' reign. It is very tempting to equate the changes at Heybridge with steps taken by the founder of a new polity or dynasty to legitimise his claims by appropriating the traditions already rooted in Heybridge.

If Cunobelin did unite the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni, this type of demonstration may have been part of his policy, which certainly also included his conspicuous claims to be Tasciovanus' son, whether or not this was true. Sealey summarised the issue in 1996. The simplest story is to accept Cunobelin to have been Tasciovanus' son and to have conquered, or otherwise come to control the territory of the Trinovantes, which he ruled from Camulodunum. Since Cunobelin's coins were issued from Camulodunum from the start of his reign, it is more likely that his accession to power over the Trinovantes was arrived at through dynastic marriage or other non-violent transition rather than as a result of conquest. If the ruling house of the Trinovantes lacked a male heir, any peaceful transfer of power may have been preferable to a struggle in which Rome may have been tempted to take sides, especially if the Catuvellauni were also faction-ridden in Tasciovanus' final years (Rodwell 1976; Sealey 1996, 62). If Cunobelin had grown up among his mother's people, this transition would have been even more acceptable. The existence of coins of Tasciovanus minted at Camulodunum has led to suggestions that he may have temporarily captured that place: possibly so, or perhaps it was a symbolic precursor to his forging of the dynastic link which eventually placed his son on the throne there. In any case, the Trinovantes may have seen much to gain from such an alliance — and at least in the short term, these gains seem to have been very tangible, as evidenced by the flood of imports into Trinovantian territory.

The Elms Farm shrines and short-lived cemetery may even have been directly connected to events in the royal house in some way. It may be vain to speculate that the 'event' represented by pyre-deposit 15417 (Chapter 7, and Vol. 2, Detailed Text 2A_07) was the death of a dynast, but the idea is tempting, especially if it was this death which allowed his successor to launch so glittering a career. There is of course no reason to suppose Tasciovanus died and was cremated here, but there was nothing to stop the

inhabitants holding feasts and rites to celebrate the event and its implications. As there was no corpse, however, we may ask if there could have been a 'pyre' or perhaps a 'beacon' unrelated to funerary activity, celebrating, for instance, a wedding or a birth, the return of the heir, or the union of peoples.

Another possibility can be suggested. Among other strategies for the legitimation of new rulers or dynasties, which Creighton (2000) plausibly suggests Late Iron Age rulers may have 'borrowed' from Republican Rome, the founding of new 'towns' was an important element. We have argued above that Heybridge was not 'urban', in our eyes, or in Roman eyes, but nevertheless it is tempting to postulate that the remodelling in the early 1st century AD may have included the rites required to bestow new status on Heybridge. Whether or not this included actual 'urban' facilities may be less important. In any case, this status does not appear to have translated into lasting significance when the province was reorganised. It is tempting, for example, to see 15417, not as a cremation-related feature, but in the light of the sacrifices preceding the reading of auguries, at the boundary of the sacred area (Creighton 2000, 205), perhaps matched by other unexplained 'ritual' pits in the temple precinct (perhaps performing a role as *mundus*, Creighton 2000, 176–9).

Certainly whoever was around in the late 1st century BC or early 1st century AD was well-connected and/or rich enough to attract goods from across the western provinces (especially marked in the amphorae), and Cunobelin is a probable candidate. As some sixty-five of his coins were also found at the site, compared to four of Tasciovanus, three of Dubnovellaunus and only one of Addedomarus (with forty-two more Late Iron Age coins having no legible issuer's name) a *floruit* in his time must also be supposed, although of course his own presence is not implied from the presence of his coinage. These could have been payments to those carrying out the remodelling work, if this was how coins were issued and used (and such payments are often seen as a likely reason for the institution of coinage in the first place). Still, we must stress that the dating evidence is probably still not sufficiently closely resolved to permit so precise an identification.

Coinage distributions as generally represented (see Rodwell 1976; Haselgrove 1987) all seem to have edges running into Heybridge, implying the Chelmer or the Blackwater may have been the border between Trinovantian and Catuvellaunian territory (assuming such territoriality was inherent in the tribal organisation). Such a boundary location would lend itself to acts of cementing a new alliance, whether by marriage or adoption or death.

It may, however, be apposite to note that only one of Cunobelin's coins from the site bears any Tasciovanus connection ('TASCI' on SF3573), presumably placing Heybridge on the Trinovantian side of the line.

Comparison can be made with the roughly contemporary site at Burgh-by-Woodbridge, Suffolk (Martin 1988) where a destruction of AD 15–25 has been attributed to Cunobelinic expansion. The demolition at Elms Farm could also be interpreted as violent destruction, since it was followed so swiftly not only by rebuilding but by wholesale remodelling of the religious centre. But this remodelling was clearly an expansion, building on, rather than destroying, existing symbolism, and done with a keen awareness of the nature of the existing site. It seems more likely to have been a positive and enhancing episode than a destructive one. Nor can it be dated so precisely here, although our feeling (it is no more) is that it should be early in the 1st century, perhaps in the first two decades.

Roman
It is relatively easy to speculate upon Heybridge's place amid the politics of personality, intrigue and dynastic struggle that has been constructed for the Late Iron Age; largely on the basis of the Roman authors, numismatics and a handful of choice sites and finds (especially elite graves). However, for the Roman period the situation is far more difficult to portray. The act of conquest seems to have left no mark on the settlement — unless the date of its remodelling is revised and the creation of a road infrastructure and imposition of a more continental-style temple are regarded as elements of an imposed Roman re-founding episode.

Following the conquest, tribal territories were subsumed into the system as administrative areas controlled from the *civitates* and power was taken from the hereditary elite. With local cultural and political identity becoming blurred in the face of *romanitas*, Heybridge quickly lost any political role it previously held. This may have been compounded by the removal, either voluntary or enforced, of the disempowered elite to Camulodunum (Colchester), the supremacy of which was confirmed in its Roman role as the civitas capital. Thus, quickly descending to the status of an agricultural village with little social hierarchy in its population, Heybridge may have quickly assumed a commensurate lowly political role of purely local influence — if political, rather than straight-forward local administration and service, is an appropriate term by this time.

There is insufficient evidence for any meaningful exploration on Saxon period society or politics.

Chapter 6. Religious Practice and Belief

I. Introduction

The subject of religion, while seemingly ever-present in some form or another in Late Iron Age and Roman settlements, is particularly central to the study and understanding of Heybridge, given the apparent primacy of its religious focus throughout the life of the settlement (Area J). The role and influence of religious belief in the daily lives of the settlement population was surely far-reaching and demands consideration at many levels: its impact on the physical settlement, on the community at large, and on sub-groups or individuals within it.

The temple complex inevitably constitutes the focus for this study. Central to the settlement and, perhaps, to the lives of its population, consideration of the form and development of this cult locus provides an insight into the nature and function of Late Iron Age and Romano-British religion, at least in southern England. The presence of this cult place within the settlement at Heybridge enables the appreciation of such places outside the accepted major towns and cities of the Roman period. Particularly pertinent is the study of temple layout, the use of space and the evidence for specific practices undertaken within and adjacent to its precinct. In pursuit of this, Smith's investigation of *The Differential Use of Constructed Sacred Space* (2001), published during the writing of this section, is particularly informative.

While the temple was a focus for religious activity, excavation has revealed evidence of other forms of observance and ritual elsewhere across the settlement. This ranged from the personal use of religious or symbolic items in the domestic setting to the symbolic burial of selected assemblages. The latter, referred to as 'special', 'ritual', 'deliberate' or 'structured' deposits in the archaeological literature, may be considered a form of religio-superstitious practice, although this may be more a product of our own cultural experience and values than anything else. Indeed, through comparison with depositional practice within and directly associated with the temple precinct, it can be shown that such practice was, in fact, normative. Although no doubt constituting only a small part of otherwise intangible practices, the widespread use of structured deposition, over both space and time, indicates widespread adherence to various beliefs within the sphere of everyday life. Investigation of their temporal patterning is particularly instructive as to the apparently changing mindset of the settlement population through time. Lastly, although dealt with in detail in Chapter 7, funerary practice as an aspect of religious expression is also worthy of some consideration here; particularly as some forms of structured deposits seem to share certain traits with formal burials.

II. The shrine and temple complex

Late Iron Age origins
(Fig. 6.1)
A detailed consideration of the structural development of the temple precinct and its buildings is presented in the stratigraphic/structural report (Vol. 2, Section 2 and summarised above in Chapter 3, Section II), but the *reasons* for its evolution and continuance and of its religious significance have also to be addressed.

Probably founded in the second half of the 1st century BC, the location of the sacred place, denoted by shrines, is likely to have been of prime importance. The postulated shrines comprised Building 7, a small square building, and immediately to its west, Building 8, a small circular building (Fig. 6.1, Pl. 3.1). Within Building 8 was a small pit with a complete grog-tempered jar set upright inside it, interpreted as a votive offering inserted into the floor of the building. Buildings 9–11 have also been tentatively identified in the close vicinity and may represent further elements of an apparently unenclosed sacred complex. Although the settlement occupied a relatively flat river terrace, the contour plan shows that these structures were located on a slight gravel rise or elongated ridge that was never more than 1m higher than the surrounding land. Thus, the shrines were built on the most prominent part of the terrace. This suggests that criteria of visibility and location overlooking the estuary were decisive factors in their placement within the settlement. The early morning ground mists, noted to occur during excavation, may have produced the effect of the shrines 'floating', so adding to the mystery of this sacred place.

This was clearly not the first use of this elevated position. A small group of Middle Bronze Age post-holes underlay this temple complex, the function of which remains undetermined (Atkinson and Preston 2001). Whether this constitutes mere coincidence of use of a topographical feature, or the deliberate perpetuation of a significant location that remained in folk memory to this time, is similarly unclear.

Other than the presence of the upright grog-tempered jar thought to have been inserted into the floor of Building 8 (see pit 18578/Group 17, Fig. 6.1 and Vol. 2, Section 2.3.2), there is little evidence for religious practice in the earliest phases of the Iron Age settlement. Pit 18849 (Group 14), within adjacent Building 7, may have had an associated function, but the absence of material within it permits no further consideration. Indeed, similar deposits to that within Building 8 occasionally occur within apparently domestic structures as is evidenced by feature 168, in hut C8, at Little Waltham (Drury 1978, fig.9). However, if accepted as a deposit related to the early sacred use of this place, the vessel from pit 18578 (Group 17) may be used to infer a date as early as 30 BC for this activity.

Although detail relating to use and religious observance is largely absent, general statements regarding the likely function and importance of this religious place
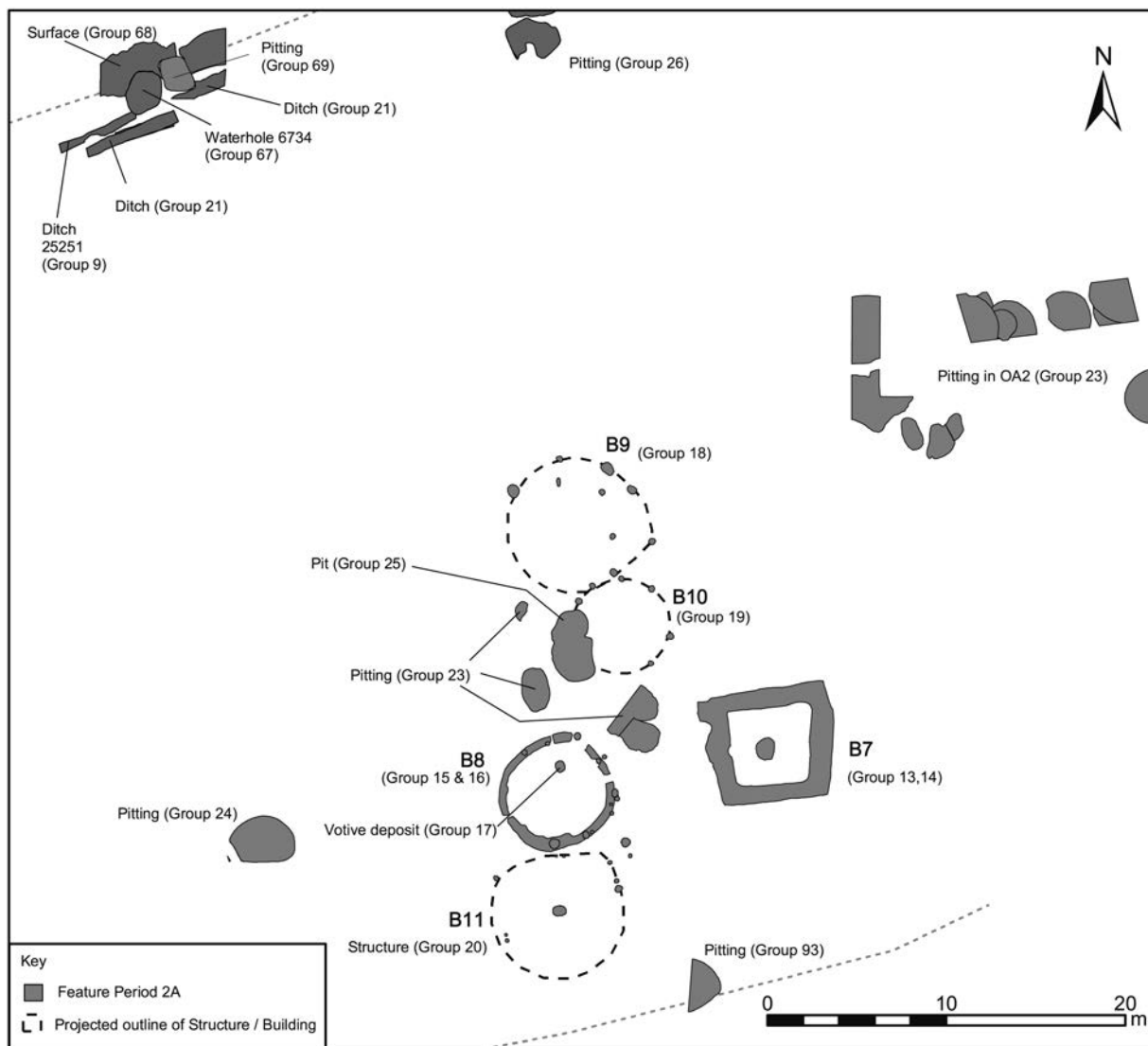
Figure 6.1 The Late Iron Age shrines, Buildings 7 and 8 (Period 2A)

within the early settlement can be offered. It is likely that the shrines had a local or site-specific importance during the late 1st century BC to early 1st century AD, although given their elevated position toward the terrace edge, it is possible that the settlement grew up alongside the already-established sacred place. The religious focus was unenclosed; the gravel rise that it occupied probably provided enough definition. There are examples of Late Iron Age shrines elsewhere in Britain that seem to have been similarly open and integral parts of the settlements in which they occurred, as with building N5 at South Cadbury (Alcock 1972), shrines RS1 and RS2 at Danebury (Cunliffe 1984) and structure R4 at Little Waltham (Drury 1978). This may indicate that access to these places was not restricted, at least not by the creation of physical barriers, though it is conceded that other forms of markers and social taboos may have been in place.

While there is no evidence for the nature of rites carried out at these shrines, their small size implies that their internal spaces were not used for ceremonies involving massed congregations. However, it is important to note the wide open areas around them. It is certainly not the case (*pace* Wait 1986, 177) that the internal capacity of the buildings 'implies that Celtic religious practices did

not involve consistent ceremonies of communal worship', only that any such ceremonies did not take place within temples (Drury 1980). It may imply that the role of the shrine structures was either one where only some people were allowed in or that it involved a more personal relationship with the *numen* (divine spirit) concerned, or, as Drury notes, that the shrine space was more of an accessory to the open area where the main activities were performed. This is an aspect that is perhaps clarified by consideration of the function of the more extensive temple complex that succeeded them, below.

The absence of conspicuous votive deposits is perhaps not inconsistent with other religious sites that predate the mid 1st century. This practice of ritual deposition in close proximity to the sacred place seems to have been a relatively late development, commonly practised at Romano-Celtic temples that often *replaced* the earlier shrines, as at Wanborough (O'Connell and Bird 1994). Other than concluding that the rites practised at this sacred place did not involve the deposition of durable votive artefacts, it is tempting to speculate that such offerings may have been placed further to the south in the salt marsh — perhaps as part of a water cult.
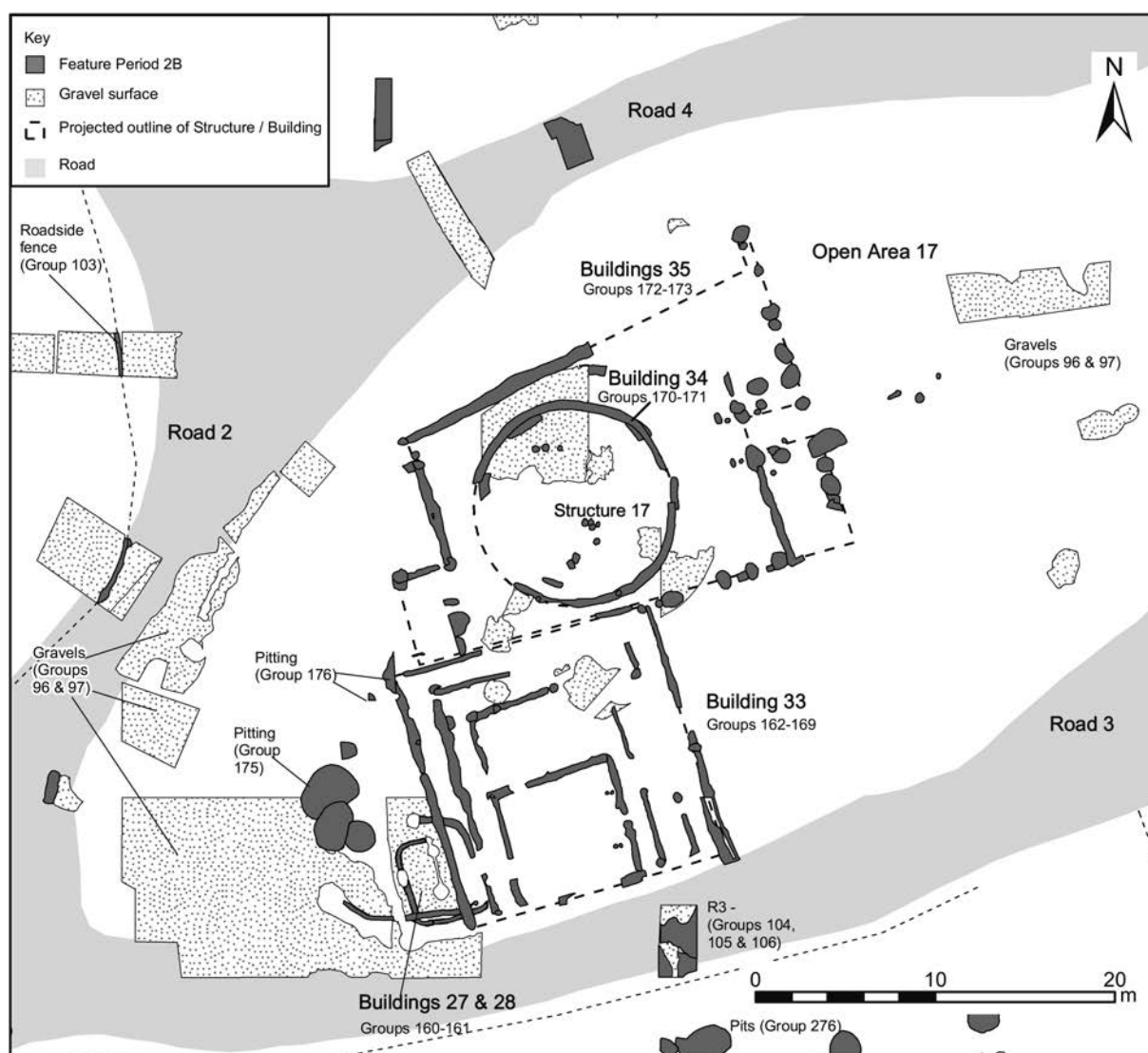
Figure 6.2 The early Roman temple, Buildings 34 and 35 (Period 2B)

Immediate pre-conquest to early Roman period
(Figs 6.2 and 6.3, Table 6.1)

Despite a lack of associated ritual artefacts from which to deduce significance and status, this sacred place seems to have acquired a considerable importance by the mid 1st century AD.

As has already been discussed (Chapter 3), it was remodelled as part of a wider settlement redevelopment and the shrines replaced with a new religious complex that included a Romano-Celtic temple. That this remodelling has very significant implications for our understanding of the issues of settlement status and politics is not in doubt and is dealt with in the relevant sections (Chapters 4 and 5). Whether or not this was accompanied by a fundamental change in either religious practice or dedication is more difficult to determine. However, the very marked architectural changes may be interpreted as reflecting (even imposing) at least a degree of change in the format and detail of worship. These seem to amount to a more formal, and to some extent exclusionist, approach to religion — though perhaps this is merely more obvious to deduce from the architecture of the Romano-Celtic temple than from that of the earlier shrines.

The former shrines, Buildings 7 and 8 (Fig. 6.1) were destroyed and buried beneath a new gravel surface. Two, probably temporary, buildings (27 and 28) were constructed on the southern edge of the area, beside Road 3 (Fig. 6.2). These were soon demolished when over the site of Building 8 a very large square building, Building 33, with an internal labyrinthine subdivision, was erected. Shortly after the construction of Building 33, a second structure, Building 34, was built to the north of it. Building 34 was a circular temple of some 11m diameter which occupied much of the interior of a trapezoidal, porticoed enclosure (Building 35). A clustering of post-holes (Structure 17) within Building 34 might denote a structure, possibly an altar/shrine, at the rear (west side) of the *cella* interior. There was, however, an absence of substantial post settings within the building and there was no substantive evidence that it was roofed.

For the first time, the sacred area was obviously defined, firstly by the newly created road infrastructure and subsequently supplemented by boundary markers in the form of ditches and fences. The physical separation of the temple precinct from the rest of the settlement suggests that access to the sacred place was more controlled than previously. This was not a simple and singular division.

A Open space
B Precinct
C Enclosure
D Cella
➤ Point of access
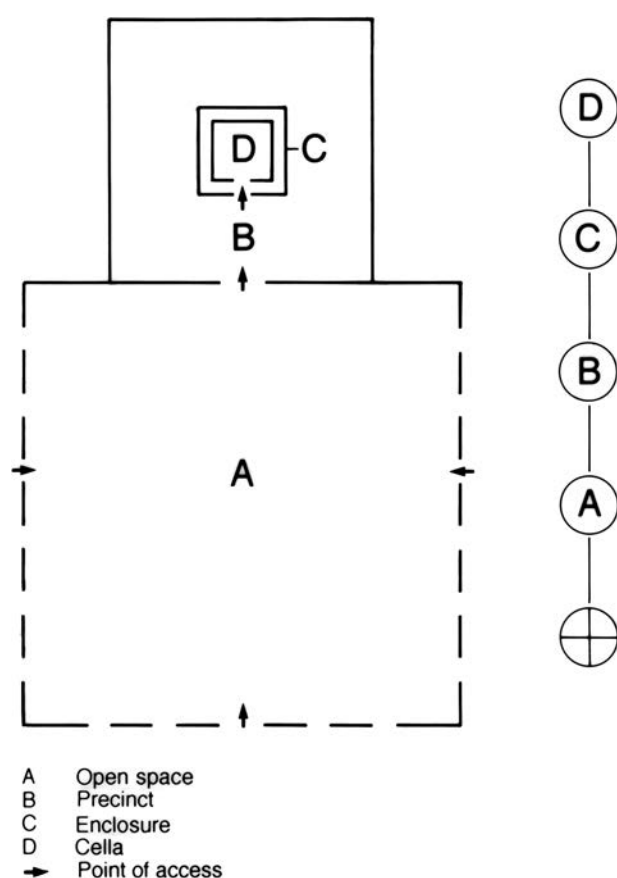
Figure 6.3 Schematic permeability map showing the hierarchy of access to the temple space

The internal arrangement of the postulated altar/shrine Structure 17 within the circular *cella* (Building 34), itself within a trapezoidal enclosure (Building 35) and, in turn, within its own precinct or *temenos*, shows that there was a clearly defined hierarchy of access to the various parts of the complex (Fig. 6.2). The permeability map showing which areas could be accessed from where, with its most simple of linear arrangements, serves to emphasise the deliberateness and singularity of plan and focus (Fig. 6.3). Thus, including the open space in front of the temple, there may have been as many as four zones that may be used to infer corresponding 'ranks' of temple users.

The surface areas of each of these zones have been calculated as a proxy for differing levels of inclusion and exclusion (Table 6.1). The relative quantity of people that each 'rank' comprised may perhaps be very roughly estimated from the size of each zone. Starting from the temple *cella* outward, this can be expressed as a ratio of approximately 1:2:20:40. Such calculations have not taken into account the areas of the other buildings that occupied the precinct at various times. The earliest phase of temple complex does not seem to have been physically separated from the open space; although this is not to say

there was no psychological divide. Thus, for different phases, the zone areas could be calculated differently and the number of zones reduced to three. Rather than laboriously present revised calculations for each temple complex phase or settlement period, such variations and their possible implications are considered below in discussion of the use, admittance and access of each perceived religious zone. Although the concentric structuring of the complex displays increasing sacredness and exclusion towards its centre, it is dangerous to assume that access was a simple reflection of social hierarchy. Instead, we must remember that issues of gender, age and initiation may also have been restrictive criteria.

The architecture and layout of the various buildings and boundaries enable some discussion on the importance and use of the different parts of the sacred space. Within this, elements of both diametric and concentric structuring are clearly the product, or expression, of religious belief, symbolism and practice. These aspects are considered in the discussion of the various elements of the religious place, below.

The temple cella use
The *cella* and its trapezoidal enclosure (Buildings 34 and 35), being the two central elements of the complex and those with the smallest capacities, were clearly the most exclusive. Access to this inner sanctum is speculated to have been restricted to members of the priesthood (and/or secular guardians?) and perhaps selected worshippers. Regular participants may have comprised the local elite, community leaders and dignitaries. However, a degree of controlled admission may have been afforded to those with a particular purpose of worship, perhaps to petition the deity on a particular matter. Ritual observance within the temple is presumed to have been focused upon the altar/shrine (Structure 17) that occupied its interior, but for which we have no evidence of form, purpose or dedication.

Although the trapezoidal enclosure of the temple excluded wider participation in the intimate rituals undertaken within, it may not have been particularly substantial — perhaps little more than a screening fence, except along its more ornate frontage (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3). This screen probably little exceeded the height of a man, with the tower-like *cella* protruding above. It is quite possible that the *cella* was the tallest structure of the settlement and that its surrounding enclosure was intended to distance visitors from the inner sanctum while at the same time providing it with an impressive entrance. After all, we can only speculate as to the decoration of this screening wall, which may have been richly carved, painted with religious iconography or bestrewn with offerings, tokens and prayers.

The function of the trapezoidal enclosure was not entirely that of simple exclusion from the temple *cella*. The buildings or rooms that flanked its east-facing doorway clearly had a role. It is assumed that these rooms

Zone	Internal area	Access	Admittance
Cella	85m^2	Single point of entry	Priests, ?dignitaries
Cella enclosure	155m^2	Single point of entry	Priests, ?dignitaries
Temple precinct	1560m^2	?Single point of entry	Restricted numbers of worshippers and pilgrims
'Open space'	3500+m^2	Multiple, unenclosed	General populus**[public?]**, mass participation?

Table 6.1 Size and accessibility of temple 'zones'
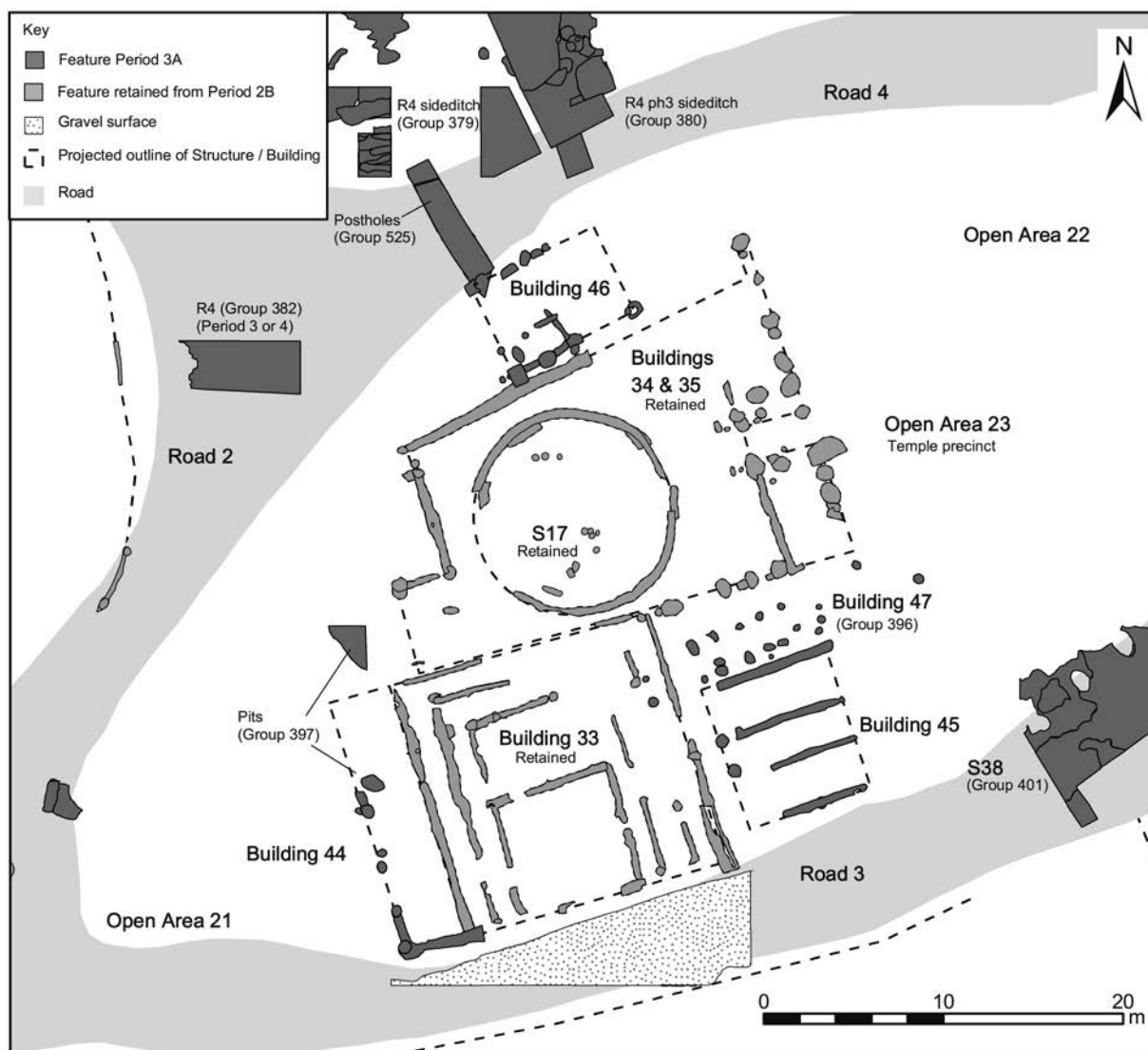
Figure 6.4 Additions to the early Roman temple, Buildings 44–47 (Period 3A)

looked inward and may have acted as storerooms, offices or accommodation. However, the post-built construction of the external frontage wall, as opposed to the slot-built technique of the other walls, may equally suggest that it was colonnaded and thus open to the front. Accepting this interpretation, the rooms could have been ancillary shrines or even shops that devotees encountered before entering the temple *cella*.

Precinct use
(Fig. 6.4)
While the surrounding temple precinct was delimited on three sides, the east side was initially left open. In this period of early temple development, the division between precinct interior and the open space in front of it may thus have been negligible. Use of the precinct was concentrated on the area in front of the temple; the movement of general devotees around and into the temple *cella* was clearly not part of the plan. 'Concentric' Building 33 was an integral part of the plan and, in fact, was probably constructed before the trapezoidal enclosure. Apparently fronting on to Road 3 and blocking access to the rear of the precinct along the south side of the temple, it seems to have had its own distinct function. The concentric arrangement of its

foundations suggests the partition of its interior into a series of corridors or galleries around a central room. Although such an ancillary building could be conveniently ascribed a function such as visitors' or priests' accommodation, a religious designation is preferred. The fact that it overlay, and was precisely centred upon, the earlier circular shrine (Building 8) is a good indication that this building was instrumental in the perpetuation of the significance of this sacred place — perhaps serving to mark a particularly venerated spot.

Although extremely speculative, Building 33 could be construed to have comprised a series of physical and ritual passages leading to some central mystery. The central space may have been a shrine, or a mausoleum, possibly an above-ground Folly Lane 'Funerary Shaft' (Niblett 1999); the walls may have been less for purposes of exclusion than to delay the arrival, so creating a sense of anticipation and deepening involvement. The interior space was small, and cannot have been intended to permit more than a few celebrants to enter at once. Again, this implies either a deliberately exclusive rite perhaps closely controlled by a priesthood, or a very personal level of relationship with the mysteries.

Such perpetuation suggests that the abandonment of the shrines, the remodelling of the sacred place and the switch to a Romano-Celtic-style centre of worship was not accompanied by a dramatic departure from earlier belief. This is not to say that the format of religious observance remained static. The development from shrine to temple, and of the changes in religious practice that may be assumed from this, could perhaps be seen as part of a wider social and political change along continental lines. This may have amounted to a Gallo-Romanisation of society that was the precursor of Romanisation-proper as brought about by the conquest. The adoption of Aylesford Culture burial practice and the emergence of important centres (perhaps proto-towns) such as Verlamion, Silchester and perhaps Camulodunum, are clear markers of the introduction and evolution of continental influences into pre-conquest society. It is perhaps acceptable to regard the adoption and development of Gallo-Roman/ Romano-Celtic temples as another aspect of this.

In the west of the precinct, that is to the rear of the temple, the area was essentially open and surfaced — perhaps a yard. However, it was occupied by a single large pit (Group 176) inserted close to the rear walls of Buildings 33 and 35 (Fig. 6.2). Its location appears careful and deliberate and perhaps represents rubbish disposal, but equally may have had a ritual function. Although large, the pit itself was otherwise unremarkable and the majority of its contents of a mundane and domestic nature; though a 'phallus-and-fist' amulet (SF4742, Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11) may just hint at a further dimension to its use.

Whether used for the disposal of sacred or profane material, the same symbolism seems to be manifest in this feature. Material that had outlived its worldly use, that had effectively 'died', was buried on the 'dark' side of the precinct — that is, to the rear of the temple. This has connotations of *solar rites*, an aspect of religious belief and observance that is discussed further, below. Thus, if the rear of the precinct had its own particular use, the surfaced area that lay between the temple and the precinct frontage wall was probably the only part in which worshippers could congregate (an area of *c.* 460 m^2). No particular ritual use of this space is evident in this period. Its surface, along with the rest of the precinct interior, seems to have been kept scrupulously clean. This is in contrast to temples such as those at Harlow (France and Gobel 1985, 35) and Woodeaton (Goodchild and Kirk 1954, 20) and suggests that deposition and accumulation of votive material was not an aspect of the precinct at Heybridge. Perhaps cleanliness was a deliberate part of the religious observance here, though this is not to say that such material was not stored or deposited elsewhere.

The addition of further buildings to the complex (Buildings 44 to 47, Fig. 6.4) in Period 3A may have represented little more than the increased provision of facilities (*e.g.* ancillary shrines, priest's or visitor's quarters, storerooms or shops). It is not known whether the siting of Building 45 over the Late Iron Age square shrine Building 7 was on purpose or purely fortuitous. The need for an expanded religious complex may indicate the growing fortunes or popularity of the temple and its deity or deities and certainly confirm the concentration of religious activity to the front of the precinct. On the basis of other excavated examples of temples and other public buildings, an outdoor altar might have been expected in front of temple *cella* and enclosure entrances, but instead is conspicuously absent at Heybridge. In view of the later existence of a likely shrine/altar inside the *cella*, it is possible that the intimate rites of sacrifice and dedication were exclusively undertaken within this inner sanctum. This would suggest a highly exclusionist form of religious practice that discouraged wider participation, or even the opportunity to play the role of spectator. However the developed plan and interrelationship of temple complex, precinct and open space, would suggest that external activities involving audiences also took place. The use of relatively ephemeral or portable outdoor altars should not be discounted and may account for the generally low incidence of altars at other temple sites in southern Britain as noted by Smith (2001, fig.5.12).

The mid to later Roman period
(Fig. 6.5)
It was not until the mid 2nd century (Period 3B) that extensive changes were wrought to the buildings of the temple complex. The demolition of all pre-existing buildings and the creation of a simplified layout, dominated by an enlarged circular temple within a more clearly defined precinct, was a fairly drastic architectural act, but did not necessarily constitute major change in religious belief or practice.

The temple cella use
The enlarged temple *cella* (Building 52) was a straightforward replacement of the earlier version (Fig. 6.5). It was built directly on top and retained the same alignment of doorway on the precinct entrance, instead of shifting southward to occupy a more central position within the newly cleared interior. Continuity was thus clearly a factor in this rebuilding.

Within the new *cella*, a substantial flint-and-mortar foundation, 5811, replaced the earlier posited altar/shrine. Positioned at the back of the *cella*, opposite the doorway, this foundation presumably supported an altar (or even a statue) that was clearly the focus of the whole complex, though there is no evidence of the religious practices carried out in relation to it.

Precinct use
The construction of the wooden wall/fence Structure 39 along the east front created a fully enclosed precinct for the first time. This may be superficially interpreted as representing the adoption of increasingly exclusionist practices. However, it should be noted that the replacement of the earlier *cella* and its surrounding trapezoidal enclosure with the single new *cella* had effectively already removed a barrier. Thus the imposition of a precinct wall may have been intended to both enlarge and fully enclose the precinct without increasing the number of exclusionary zones. Fence-lines (*e.g.* Structure 38) and shallow ditches were placed along the roadsides and the precinct area resurfaced with gravel. Thus, in this scheme of enlargement, the entire precinct now assumed the function of the earlier trapezoidal enclosure. Explained in these terms, it may be demonstrated that the essential form and use of space within the precinct remained basically unaltered and that it is thus possible to assume that religious practice remained similarly unchanged.
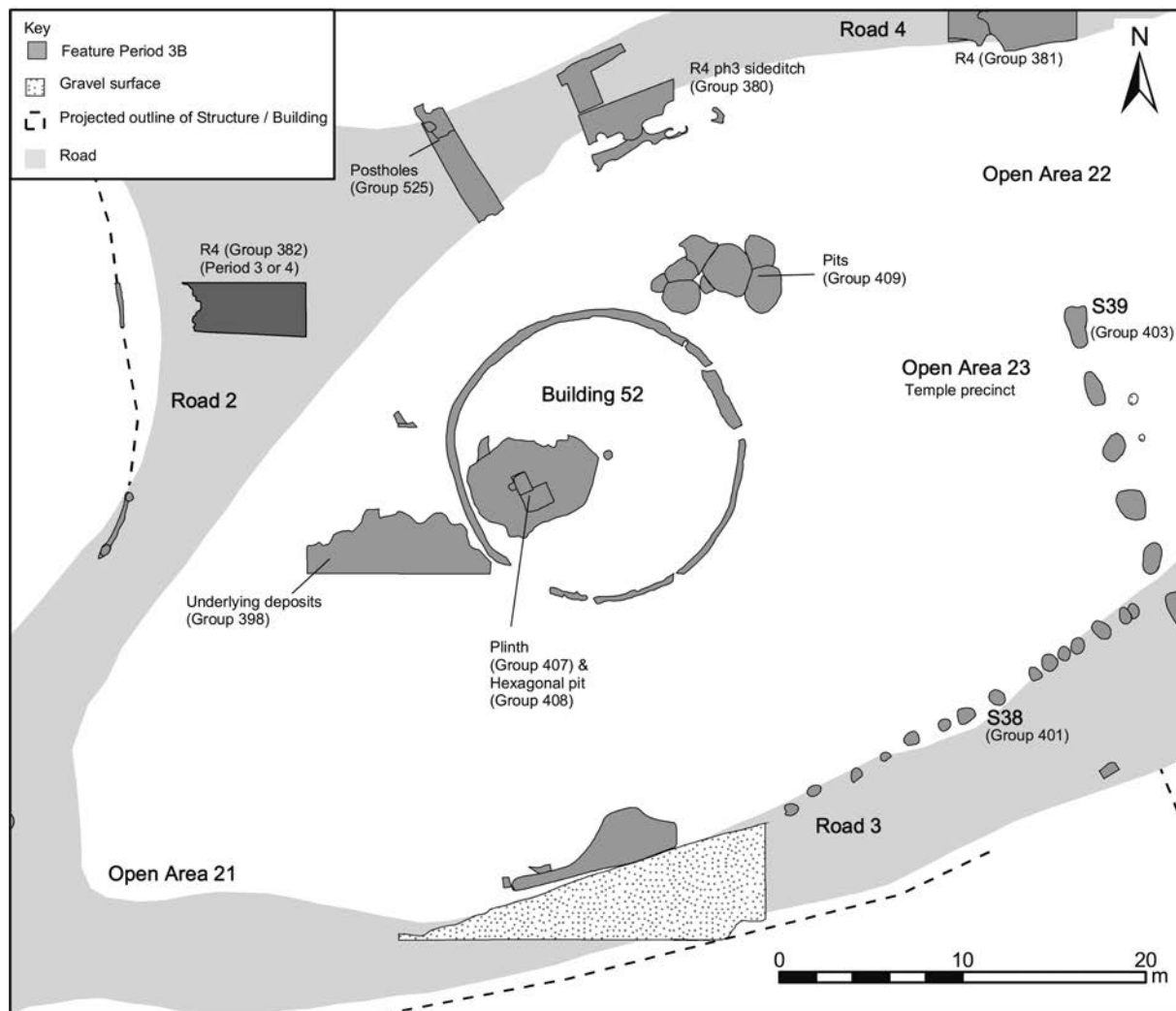
Figure 6.5 The early 2nd-century temple and precinct, Building 52 (Period 3B)

The expansion of the early Roman complex may readily imply that its religious significance enjoyed increasing popularity and prosperity and required a number of different functions housed in different types of space. However, it is more difficult to decide whether or not this remodelling of the precinct interior represented expansion, reduction or simply change. The reduction in the number of buildings, while reducing the ancillary facilities, simplified the appearance of the complex, identified a single focus and increased the amount of available open space around it. Thus, there was the potential for more people to witness and participate in the kinds of ritual carried out in close proximity to the temple.

Such activity within the precinct may have increased, after it was resurfaced and a large 'monumental post' Group 427 erected in its north-east corner. In the continued absence of an outdoor altar, the latter is a reminder that more than one kind of observance may have been conducted and that, although primary, the temple *cella* was not the sole focus of religious activity. Indeed, the remodelled precinct saw further use of its external area in the form of the digging of numerous intercut pits (Group 409) directly to the north-east of the *cella* entrance. These were cut through the gravel surfacing of an area that had formerly been kept clean and free of obstruction and were clearly a significant departure from

earlier practice. Carefully respecting the temple and access to it, the pits contained apparently mundane rubbish assemblages of a domestic nature, apart from a pipe-clay Venus figurine (SF4717) in pit 13366 (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.1.5). However, the very specific location of the pit group is highly suggestive of a function related to the temple itself. Closer inspection of the pit contents revealed, in contrast to the surrounding domestic settlement, the exclusive deposition of the remains of mature sheep (Vol. 2, Section 4.2). Their presence in these highly conspicuous pits is suggestive of ritual slaughter, consumption and disposal during the course of feasting rituals. That only older animals were selected is in contrast to the sacrificial sheep remains at Harlow and in some phases at Chelmsford. This may reflect a distinct and different rite being carried out at the Heybridge temple, although it has also been suggested that these represent the more practical use of less valuable stock (Vol. 2, Section 4.2).

The precinct wall was no doubt an important feature of the religious place, marking both a physical and symbolic boundary between the sacred and the profane — the otherworld and the real world, the pure and the unclean. As well as restricting access to the precinct, both phases of the wooden wall/fence (Structures 39 and 46) may also have been used to convey religious messages. Carved or
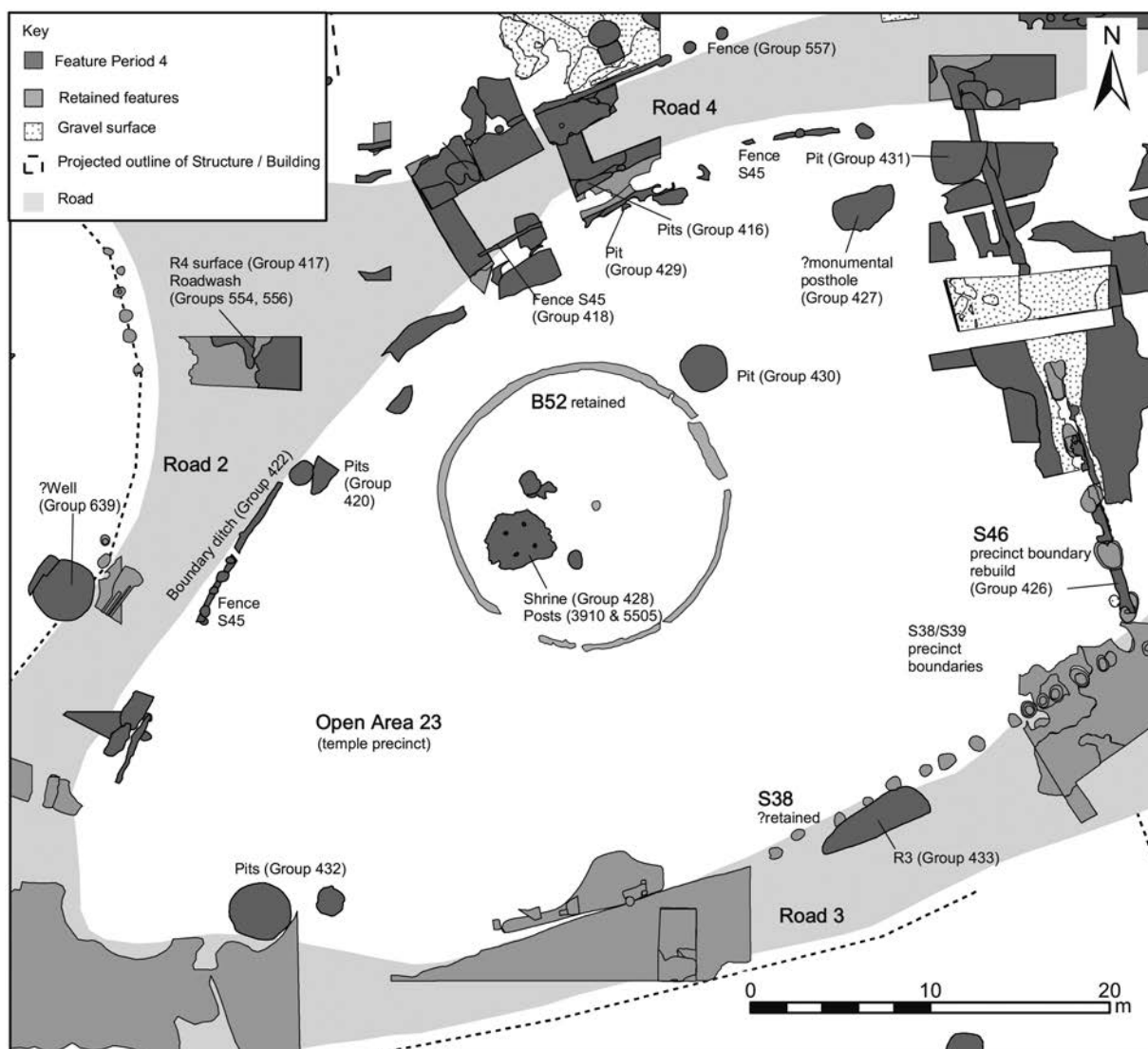
Figure 6.6 Remodelling of the temple precinct (Period 4)

painted iconography or imagery may have been employed to make the significance of the boundary, and of the temple behind it, more explicit to those approaching or congregating in front of it. It is likely that the entrance was of prime significance in this, being the point of access into the sanctified place. The importance of the various doorways and points of access of the complex is further discussed in the consideration of alignment and solar orientation.

The final temple complex

The temple cella use
(Fig. 6.6)
While the structure of the *cella* itself did not undergo any further detectable change, its internal space was modified. In the latest phase of temple *cella* use the flint-and-mortar ?altar base was demolished to floor level, and the surrounding hexagonal pit 5588 possibly denotes a further, though ultimately abandoned, attempt at its total removal. The reasons for the removal of this, the relatively impressive central focus of the whole complex, is unclear. However, its demolition was a deliberate and careful act,

reducing it to below floor level and capped with clean clay. Indeed, this act of sealing or capping may have symbolic connotation, since clay was valued in other circumstances (*e.g.* potting, lining of wells) as a *pure* and impermeable material. This is perhaps a good example of the act of physical destruction and alteration having religious connotation and requiring certain types of rite of termination and closure to ensure satisfactory conclusion and a sound foundation for that which replaced it. In the case of the altar plinth, it was replaced by a new, less substantial, altar or shrine (Structure 47) of wooden construction (Fig. 6.6) on exactly the same spot. Although change had been wrought, the use of the temple *cella* as a place of religious significance, worship and perhaps storehouse of things sacred, clearly continued to the end of the 4th century and perhaps into the 5th.

Although it cannot be ascertained whether the temple functioned beyond this, the lack of encroaching features upon the *cella*'s foundations suggests that, at the very least, the structure survived as a venerated ruin. Considering the preceding 500 years or so of continuous use as a sacred site, this location must have retained a residual importance for some time afterwards, at least in

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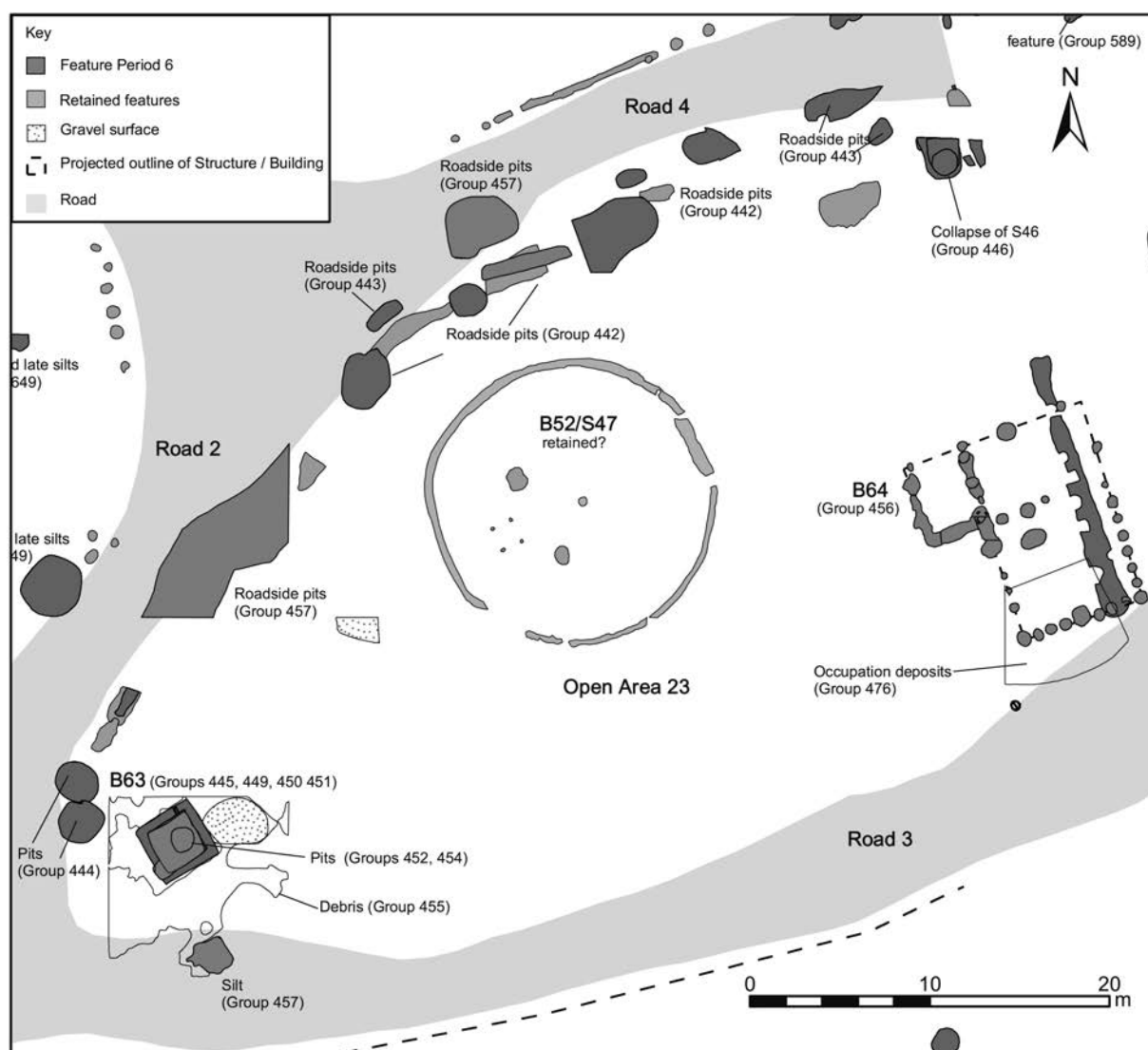
Figure 6.7 The final phase of the temple precinct (Period 6)

living memory and perhaps perpetuated longer by local folk tradition. The temple precinct is one of the few excavated areas of Elms Farm in which no Saxon features were detected and it appears that this location of the former Roman settlement may have been actively avoided by later occupation activity. Nor was its former significance revised as the focus of a cemetery, as seems to have been the case at Henley Wood, Somerset (Watts and Leach 1996).

Precinct use
(Fig. 6.7)
Although the temple *cella* appears to have survived, with only internal alterations being carried out, the interior of the surrounding precinct underwent significant change. Two monumental posts were erected, one inside (Group 427), the other outside the precinct (Group 440). Within the precinct, the location of pitting moved in the mid Roman period from adjacent to the temple doorway to the northern periphery (Groups 416, 420 and 429), and many of the artefacts recovered from their fills suggest ritual activity. Similar deposition was noted within the mid 3rd-century backfilling of pit 5394 (Group 432), on the south side of the precinct. Outside the precinct doorway,

alongside monumental post 21801 (Group 440), partially infilled well 22210 (Group 448) acted as a ritual pool into which votive items were cast (Fig. 3.9).

Attitudes toward the sanctity of this enclosed space appeared to have changed sometime in the later 4th century AD. Ritual deposition in pits located within its interior ceased. Instead, the encroachment of amorphous pits (very unlike those of the later 2nd century alongside the *cella*) penetrated and fragmented the fence-lines along the roadsides that defined the precinct (Groups 442–4, 457 and Fig. 6.7). While their fills largely comprised apparently mundane rubbish deposits, several contained chicken remains that indicate the insertion of animal sacrifices along this boundary. This suggests that while the physical barriers of ditches and fences no longer survived, the symbolic recognition of the precinct boundary was maintained.

Perhaps most importantly, the front precinct wall was demolished, possibly following its partial collapse due to structural defects, and not replaced thereafter (Fig. 6.7). This emphatically lay open the sacred precinct to the rest of the world and may indicate that the sanctity of this space was somewhat diluted, if not lost. Such erosion and disintegration of the defining fabric of the precinct may

have been a product of time and the elements combined with gradual neglect in the maintenance of the sacred place. This situation was perhaps allowed to continue until the precinct 'lost' its air of sanctity and separateness to a point at which it could not be revived. This left the *cella* standing in conspicuous isolation as the sole religious entity. Apparently mundane domestic activity was allowed to encroach into the area surrounding it. The construction of Building 64, overlying the line of the former precinct wall (Fig. 6.7), is interpreted as the culmination of the secularisation of the precinct. The siting of lead-working Building 63, to the south-west of the temple, is regarded as a further part of this.

However, a different approach to the interpretation of these latest Roman developments may be to see the process of decline that they embody as *deliberate*. Turner has identified a broadly similar building at Ivy Chimneys, Witham, as a tentative Romano-Christian church or chapel (Turner 1999, fig.46, 248–9, building F4044). He supports this in reference to other 4th-century examples in close proximity to Romano-British temples and cemeteries. In the light of such an interpretation, Building 64 at Elms Farm could be regarded as purposefully constructed over the *deliberately* slighted precinct wall in a symbolic act of dominance over the pagan significance of this place. However, this is not the present authors' preferred scenario for Elms Farm. The absence of such structures as the Ivy Chimneys font (Turner 1999, 51–55) makes identification of specific Christian use difficult. This is compounded by the north–south alignment of Building 64 which is at odds with the majority of structures hitherto speculated as churches (*e.g.* Brean Down, ApSimon 1965; Icklingham, West and Plouviez 1976; Richborough, Bushe-Fox 1932; Uley, Ellison 1980). In addition, it would seem to respect the access to the temple, its northern extent stopping short of the earlier precinct entrance.

The only tangible evidence of Christianity at Heybridge is in the form of a chi-ro symbol scratched onto the underside of one of the pewter bowls in pit 6641 (Group 579), only a short distance away from the temple and Building 64, in Area H. While its significance is discussed both by Crummy (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.4.5.2) and in Chapter 6, this Period 5 assemblage could possibly have been associated with the use of the late building, ostensibly for religious purposes, although personal ownership by a Christian may be more likely.

In the absence of evidence of the temple *cella* itself having been slighted along with its precinct wall, it is assumed that the two buildings co-existed in the late 4th century. Assuming that the *cella* continued to be a place of pagan veneration, could the temple and a Christian church be expected to function alongside each other? This seems extremely doubtful. The interpretation of Building 64 as a non-religious structure, perhaps a domestic dwelling, is thus preferred although it remains possible that its use was associated in some way with the final use of the temple.

The latest Roman pits (Group 442, Group 443, Group 444) on the edge of the temple precinct closely follow the patterning of those of Period 5, being generally large and located along the edge of Road 4. Many of these are of distinctive elongated plan which suggests that the pits were deliberately and tightly restricted within the confines of the precinct and not permitted to encroach upon the adjacent thoroughfare. The finds assemblages from these

Period 6 pits are very similar to those of Period 5. However, a number of pits contained artefacts that may constitute votive offerings, including a face flagon, shale bracelet fragments, chicken bones, coins, keys and iron tools as well as many small fragments of burnt bubbly glass, all from a late Roman convex cup and a rim fragment from a glass bowl, the interior of which had been heated to melting point. It is possible that the glass vessels represent ritual vessels from the temple itself.

The 'open space' use

With the creation of the Romano-Celtic temple and the imposition of the road infrastructure, an integral 'open space' was defined in front, that is to the east. The immediate pre- and post-conquest use of this area, prior to its formal separation from the precinct proper by a wall (Structure 39), is not entirely clear. However, the eastward continuation of gravel surfaces that surrounded the temple complex defined an extensive open area that lay between Roads 3 and 4 and extended northwards to Road 5. Located directly in front of the temple, the close association of the open space with the temple cannot be denied. Its resurfacing continued even after the imposition of the precinct wall and it is clear that this space was actively maintained and kept clear of obstruction and domestic occupation from the mid 1st to sometime in the 4th century. The continuance of the function of this area is testimony to its enduring importance, second only to the temple precinct itself. Certainly, outside of the temple precinct, no other area of the settlement was treated in this way (even the surfaced interiors of Areas H and I, see below).

Given its position and surface area (probably *c.* 3,500m^2 between Roads 3 and 4, but in excess of 5,600m^2 up to Road 5), this space was likely used for mass celebrations and perhaps fairs on key dates of the religious calendar.

The full potential and implication of the 'open space', as an area of congregation and perhaps of religious observance, was realised in the later 2nd century when the imposition of the precinct wall (Structure 39 and, later, 46) emphasised its externality from the sacred interior of the precinct. Given that this clear separation was deemed necessary, it may be possible to postulate that slightly more secular celebrations, perhaps festivals or fairs, were held on key dates of the religious calendar here. Thus, there was a perceived need to distance such profane activity. Access onto this space does not seem to have been restricted in any way with Roads 3, 4 and 5 merging imperceptibly where they met with its gravel surfacing. The northward extension of the 'open space', as far north as Road/Track 5 indicates that it had an association with, and was in some ways a further part of, Area H — across the front of which it lay. Circular Building 6 (Open Area 19, Fig. 3.3), located at what must have been almost the eastern extreme of the 'open space', may have been associated with its religious use — perhaps being a shrine or temple itself. In this context, it is possible that the building faced the elliptical enclosures 25257 and/or 25258, in Area H, at the opposite end of the 'open space'. However, our poor understanding of the early function of Area H, and of the elliptical enclosures themselves, precludes further exploration of this relationship.

While there are no close parallels in British towns, a number of Gaulish 'secondary urban centres' do appear to

have possessed similar communal spaces in front of temples, though these varied markedly in size (*e.g.* Alesia and Vendeuvre-du-Poitou in King 1995, figs 17.3 and 17.5; Ribemont-sur-Ancre in Smith 2001, map 5.29). The absence of examples from elsewhere in Britain may be due to the settlement plan of Heybridge being an early and direct export from the continent, as suggested in Chapter 3, rather than an indigenous development. In particular, it is perhaps possible to envisage Heybridge as a less developed version of Ribemont-sur-Ancre, notably lacking the theatre and bath house of the latter complex.

Use of the open space may even have intensified over time and its role in temple rites formalised and developed. In the mid Roman period, monumental post 21801 (Group 440) was erected some 11m directly in front of the precinct wall entrance (Fig. 3.9). Since its creation this boundary, and more specifically its entrance, had presumably acquired a significance and symbolism (threshold between the sacred and profane, *etc.*). Whether the post was something like a 'Jupiter column', ornately carved with symbolic imagery, or used to hang offerings from is unknown. The significance of its relation to the alignment of doorways is considered further below. However, this post did not stand in isolation but was accompanied by what appears originally to have been a well, feature 22210 (Group 448). As noted by Smith, the entry point through the outer boundaries of cult loci constitutes a transitional zone that is often the focus of specific ritual activity (Smith 2001, 7). The location of the well, just outside the precinct wall entrance, would seem to be a clear expression of this and may have been associated with purification rites prior to entry.

By the late Roman period, the nature, and perhaps use, of this feature had subtly changed. Much of the well shaft had filled up and the eroded top and slumped clay lining formed little more than a shallow pool. Into this standing body of water low-denomination copper-alloy coins and jewellery, including jet bracelets, were thrown — presumably in a modified rite that preceded entry into the precinct. It is noted that adjacent 'post-hole' 21801 (Group 440) also contained jet bracelets (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.2.4) and could perhaps be reinterpreted as a small votive pit of similar, though more personal, function.

In the absence of earlier features containing votive deposits in this vicinity, it is possible to postulate that this was a later feature of religious practice at Heybridge and that this is evidence of the development of ritual observance over time — partially in response to the nature of the structural developments (*i.e.* creation of a new doorway and threshold). The siting of well/pool 22210 (Group 448) is reminiscent of the location of the late 2nd-century pit cluster adjacent to the temple *cella* entrance and could have had a similar use and symbolism. Clearly, the precinct doorway and these adjacent features of apparent ritual function, show that this was the initial focus of attention for those who entered the settlement from the east and commenced along Road 3 and 4, perhaps ultimately congregating on the metalled 'open space'.

Alignment and solar orientation
The limited nature of the structural evidence for the earliest phase of the sacred place makes discussion of possible cosmological referents of its principal Buildings 7 and 8 extremely difficult. As has been discussed elsewhere in relation to circular buildings of all kinds,

domestic and religious (Fitzpatrick 1997b; Oswald 1997), such structures are accepted to inherently embody cyclical patterns of belief that are influenced by the natural world. Building 8 can be fitted comfortably into this, although the location of its doorway is not apparent, so we cannot be sure that it was an east-facing structure. Building 7, being square, is more difficult to place within the cosmological schema, although it may be surmised that reference to the cardinal points had significance here. However, square and rectangular shrines and, later, temples could clearly be accommodated within this belief system.

Patterns of solar orientation and alignment are altogether more obvious and explicit within the succeeding temple complex of the mid 1st to late 4th centuries. From its inception, the eastward alignment of the various elements of its plan demonstrates that solar orientation was of prime importance. This primacy was clearly perpetuated throughout, despite all the changes wrought to the complex. That the principal buildings of this complex all faced east is obvious. However, a degree of precision was introduced and maintained in the eastward alignment of their entrances upon one another. Thus, the earlier *cella* and trapezoidal enclosure entrances were aligned and this alignment was perpetuated by that of the later *cella* and the precinct wall — extending further with the addition of the monumental post 21801 (Group 440).

At the end of this line of sight, within the *cella*, was the sacred focus of the shrine/altar/statue. At least symbolically, if not physically, light was channelled toward this centre of veneration. During particular rituals, it is possible that this alignment also allowed those excluded from the inner sanctum itself to gain a glimpse of the altar/shrine. This perhaps permitted a degree of *inclusion* in what may be interpreted as an otherwise rather exclusive place of religious observance.

As has already been touched upon a number of times, the movement of the sun was symbolic of cyclical patterns in life — of birth, life and death, day and night, *etc.* Just as light was 'drawn into' the temple, so were worshippers. Consideration of the use and inter-relation of space has already emphasised the focussing of attention and the channelling of temple visitors toward the nucleus of its *cella* and its altar/shrine. Religious participation and the sense of deepening involvement felt by those progressing toward and through the complex were no doubt enhanced by this solar symbolism. However, we should also consider that this was perhaps true for the return journey *out* of the sacred place and into the outside world (especially if the *cella* was roofed — then, at least for some, there would be the physical and symbolic experience of emerging out of the darkness into the light).

The implications of solar orientation for the format and timing of religious observance is another matter. The apparent absence of opposing, west-facing, structures and alignments suggests that the emphasis of worship was on the rising, rather than the setting, of the sun. Thus, major rituals may be presumed to have been performed in the morning. Specific consideration of the likely cosmological referents of the temple complex alignment might also reflect the timing of particular celebrations in the religious calendar. The temple complex alignment as measured from the altar through the middle of the various doorways is 68° off OS north. This would correlate to a point in time somewhere midway between the spring

equinox and midsummer sunrise. The lack of a more readily identifiable point, such as the spring equinox or the midsummer solstice, may indicate that a more general symbolic orientation was embodied in this particular arrangement. Indeed, the whole settlement plan may be seen to display a similar alignment that has as much to do with practical constraints of topography and geology, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The issue of whether or not the *cella* was roofed carries implications. If it was, then sunrise and the emergence and penetration of light may have been of prime importance. If not, solar movement to a point at midday, or after, could have had a particular significance.

Associated areas, buildings and features
(Fig. 6.8)
While the focus of religious practice is presumed to have been the pair of shrines in the Late Iron Age and was clearly the temple and its precinct thereafter, adjacent areas appear to have possessed associated functions. Though not necessarily sacred areas themselves, the various spaces and features that occupied Areas H and I nevertheless represent further facilities or services needed for the full and effective functioning of the religious place. Particularly in the context of Heybridge as a postulated place of pilgrimage (below and Chapter 8), the provision of a whole infrastructure to support the primary religious role of the temple precinct is perhaps quite plausible. Secondary religious use of Areas H and I is supported by the incidence of a small number of apparent structured

deposits in each. These are discussed in relation to the phenomenon of structured deposits across the settlement in general, rather than in specific connection with the religious focus (see Section III below).

The Late Iron Age sacred *locus* may have extended northwards from the shrines (Buildings 7 and 8) into adjacent Area H. Substantial ditch 25252 (Groups 63–65, Fig. 3.1) may have delineated an associated feature, although this is admittedly highly speculative. The two phases of elliptical enclosure (Group 194) may well be successors to this ditch and, although their use remains unknown, at least serve to show that the association was perpetuated. That Areas J and H appear to have shared the same sequence of maintenance and resurfacing from the mid 1st century onwards would seem to confirm a close connection between them. Since both areas apparently fronted onto the 'open space' to the east, rather than onto Roads 1 and 2 to the west, Area H was clearly a part of this 'public' zone. Like Area J, its interior surfacing can be demonstrated to have extended eastward into the 'open area' despite the division imposed by some sort of frontage 'wall' or boundary (as eventually manifested by Structure 44).

The proliferation of storage jar hearths along the southern side of Area H, closest to the temple precinct, is also noteworthy (Fig. 6.8 and Pl. 3.4). Although they occurred elsewhere, they generally occurred singly and in domestic settings — except perhaps in Area I where a number of such structures were present following its change of use in the mid 2nd century. In this context, it is
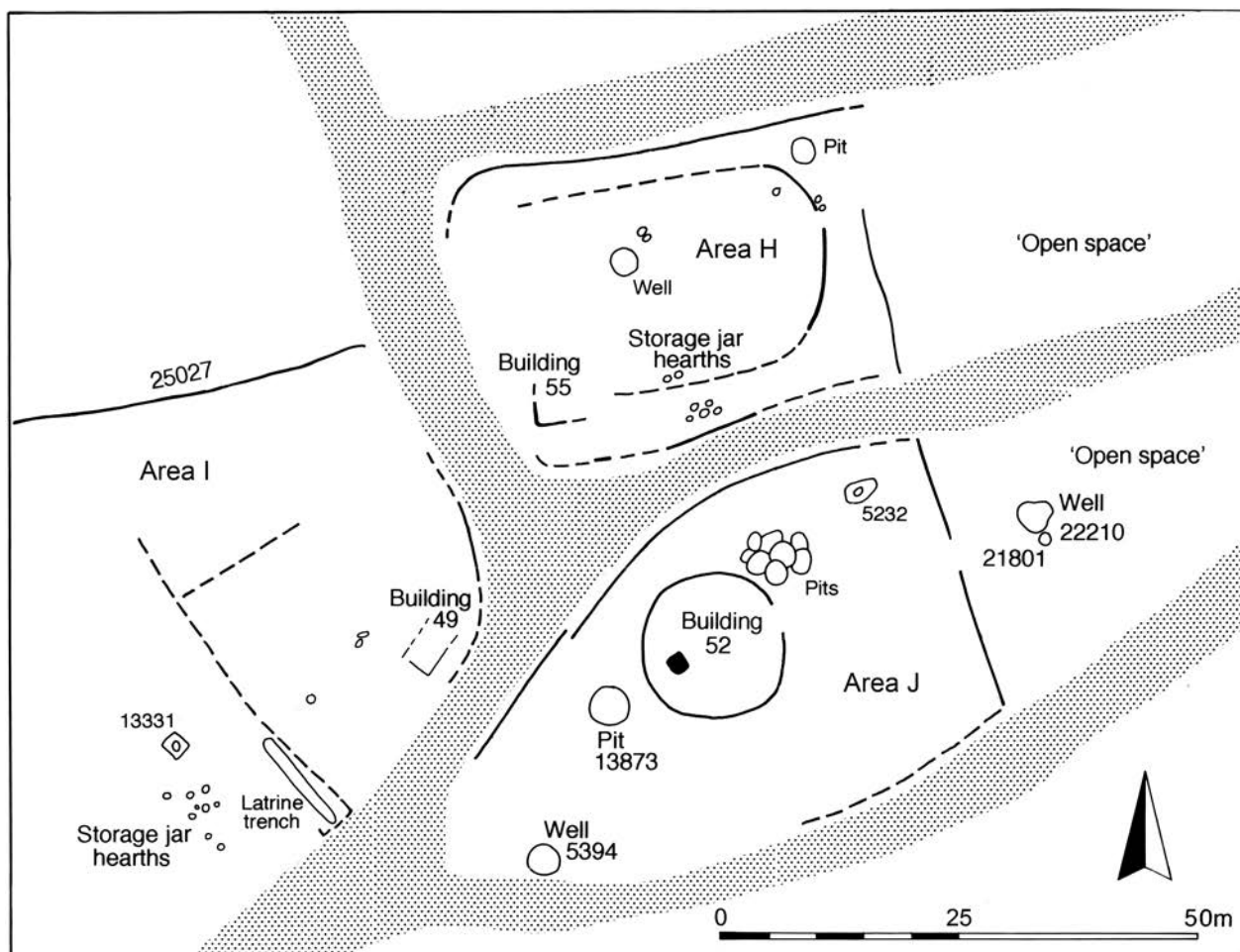
Figure 6.8 Distribution of storage-jar hearths in relation to the temple precinct

speculated that the storage jars of Areas H and I had a more specialised function. Although probably still used for baking unleavened bread, their close proximity to the temple complex is surely significant. Such storage jar ovens have been found at Chelmsford, some in close proximity to the temple (Wickenden 1992, 32), and most recently at Maltings Lane, Witham, some 600m from the religious complex at Ivy Chimneys (A. Robertson, pers. comm.). Most pertinently, a number of similar ovens at the Springhead temple complex, Kent, were found in association with *in situ* quernstones and interpreted as having produced bread for votive or sacrificial purposes (Penn 1964, 173–5).

While it has earlier been suggested that the storage jar hearths at Elms Farm represented 'fast-food outlets' serving the temple visitors, it is also possible that they were closely associated with the religious practice of the temple itself — perhaps producing flat breads for use as votive offerings or even for ritual consumption. Although the evidence for the use of such perishable foodstuffs is very slight in the archaeological record, a fragment of burnt bread found in the apsidal ditch of a possible shrine enclosure at Betchworth, Surrey (D. Williams, pers. comm.) may be one such example.

The importance and symbolism of cereal, especially wheat, to the Trinovantes cannot be overestimated. The known intensive cultivation of wheat fields in the valleys of Essex, the depiction of an ear of wheat on the coinage of Cunobelin and the inclusion of a silver ear in the Lexden Tumulus grave assemblage (Foster 1986, 88) all attest to its perceived importance and adoption as a religious symbol. One further instance, an ear-of-wheat copper-alloy pendant from the temple at Wanborough, Surrey (D. Williams, pers. comm.) is a clear link to religious and votive practice. The symbolic significance of lifecycles (*i.e.* birth/death, production/consumption), particularly concerning agricultural exploitation of the earth, is conjectured. Thus, perhaps this most basic and important agricultural product was converted into edible form with which to feed and thank the relevant divinity or divinities through offerings. Such food could also have been a feature of actual feasting practices within ritual observance. Worship at such rural temples may well have had a strong rural symbolism that found relevance with the agricultural community that used it. The religious role of Area H may be further hinted at by the presence of four assemblages deemed to be structured deposits (in features 6280/Group 531, 6539, 6641/Group 579, 16149), although these are considered as part of the wider phenomenon of ritual deposition across the settlement as a whole (see Section III below).

While Area H may have had a relatively major role to play alongside the temple and the 'open space' in front of it, to their rear, Area I may also be seen to have had a related function. However, this appears to have been a secondary, or acquired, use that perhaps developed as the importance (and attendance figures) of the temple complex grew. Initially, the function of the Area I plot does not seem to have been related to that of the sacred place. The use of the gravel surface, occupied by what appears to have been a cluster or compound of roundhouses, seems wholly domestic, although the absence of contemporary rubbish pits may argue for an alternative status. However, it is noted that many Middle and Late Iron Age farmsteads/villages seem to locate pits at arms length, away from the houses and activity areas. When they do occur in closer association, they are generally in low densities. Evidence of concerted associated use is not recognisable until the mid 2nd century when the area was dumped on and lost all indications of domestic activity.

Subsequent use, at least of parts of this plot, was clearly very different. Apparently bisected by a major fence-line (Structure 36), the south-west part of Area I acquired a distinctly 'public' character. Largely maintained as an open space, and devoid of pits and other intruding features, two principal structures occupied its interior. A free-standing 'monumental post' 13331 (Group 637) may mark a place of congregation, while 'Trench 25049' (Group 613–614) has been interpreted as a possible communal latrine (Fig. 6.8 and Pl. 3.5). These, and particularly the latrine, may be viewed in terms of the provision of facilities to cater for large numbers of devotees visiting the temple. It is possible that this change in use of Area I coincided with the rebuilding of the temple complex and was part of a wider scheme of reorganisation of the religious role of the settlement. Like Area H, the religious connotations of Area I may be evident in the presence of three structured deposits, in features 13167 (Building 23), 13469 and 13845, two of which date to its postulated mid 2nd-century change of function (see Section III below).

A place of pilgrimage
(Fig. 6.9)
It is unlikely that a relatively small and static settlement population would require such a large and elaborate temple during the course of daily religious life. The temple complex must surely have been an impressive sight in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries AD, probably best appreciated from a distance and would no doubt have dominated the view for incoming travellers from the east. The open space, a place of mass congregation, may also have been designed to maximise the visual impact of the temple complex. Thus, it is conjectured that the temple at Heybridge was a place of pilgrimage and perhaps well established on a route that led devotees from one sacred site to another. This may help explain why, on the remodelling of this religious place, the opportunity was not taken to alter its orientation so that the temple aspect was appreciated by travellers entering from the north along the major thoroughfare between Chelmsford and Colchester (via Witham or Kelvedon?) that is Road 1. Perhaps the route had been established earlier in the Late Iron Age and led from a particular shrine or other sacred site that lay to the east of Heybridge; or there was perhaps an alternative coastal route from Camulodunum with its own sacred complex. Consideration of how this temple may have related spatially to other known cult foci is presented in Chapter 8 and Fig. 6.9, but it is clear that it possessed more than a local significance and that this was perhaps maintained into the 4th century.

General, day-to-day use of this complex was probably supplemented by mass attendance at certain times in the religious calendar. The extensive nature of the temple and its associated external surface suggest that there was a major influx of visitors or worshippers on one or more days of the year. Clearly some form of event, possibly profane such as a fair, though at least containing some
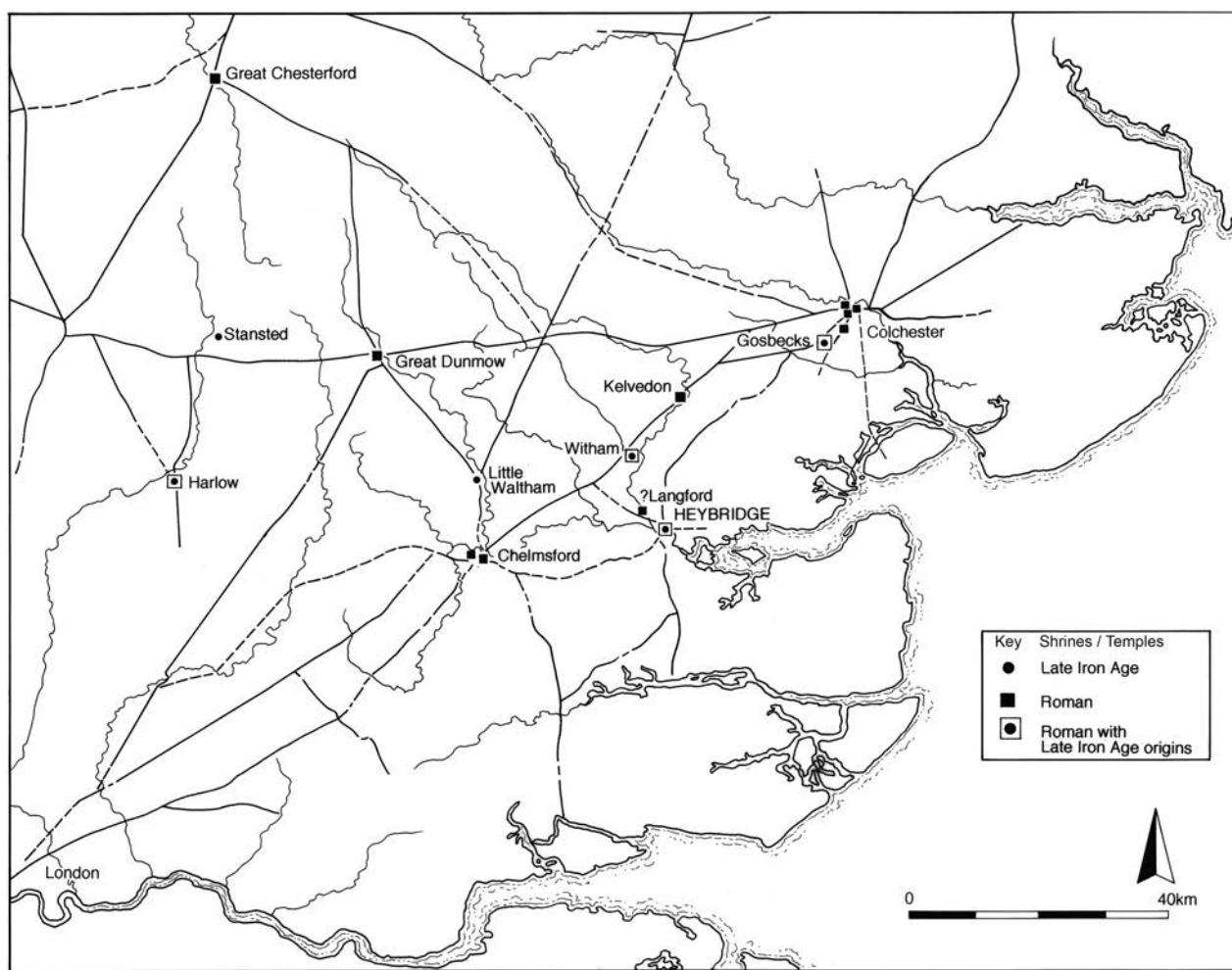
Figure 6.9 Distribution of Roman temples in Essex

religious element, took place on the open space in front of the temple precinct.

While it is relatively easy to construct an argument for Heybridge being a place of pilgrimage, it is somewhat more difficult to ascertain why. Reviewing other religious complexes that have been interpreted as having particular specialisations that attracted pilgrims, it seems that cults associated with healing were the most popular (*e.g.* Lydney, Bath). Water, in the form of springs and pools, was an important feature of these religious sites. While Heybridge is located relatively close to minor (cold) springs, rivers and the estuary, it is difficult to establish an importance derived from either water or healing using the evidence to hand. The temple clearly had an importance that drew large numbers of people to it, perhaps being the place of a local and ancestor-based cult — its apparently Romanised forms obscuring its ancient, native, cult significance.

Dedication of the shrines and temple
The dedication of the earliest shrines of this sacred place is unknown — the only recognised votive offering of this period being the small pot buried in the floor of shrine Building 8. It is speculated that the deity was probably of local significance. The importance of the place and of the deity worshipped does seem to have been great to the inhabitants of the settlement, as is clear from the endurance of the religious symbolism of this place, if not

its precise physical form. In previous discussion of the settlement's likely social and political role (Chapter 5), the early religious focus is speculated to have been associated with the veneration of an ancestor or hero from which Heybridge emerged as an important cult centre. On the eve of the conquest, it was perhaps the role of the settlement as a cult centre, with all its political and social connotations, that elevated Heybridge as a place of local to regional significance, within the territory of the Trinovantes at least. The sacred locus and the surrounding settlement were perhaps thus deemed worthy of development along continental urban lines of the towns and rural sanctuaries of Gaul, as has been suggested above.

It is assumed that, over time, the dedication of the temple became Romanised and the local deity or hero became identified with a Roman god. Evidence for the deity, or deities, involved is admittedly sparse. Even combining all objects with possible religious connections across the site, many of which need have no relation to the temple whatsoever, produces only twenty-nine objects identified as being of overtly religious symbolism (Table 6.2). Of these, only six came from Area J itself with an additional nine from associated Areas H and I. Potentially, two further items metal detected from machining layer 4000 could also have derived from these areas, although their precise locations were not recorded to allow this to be determined. Items which might claim connections with Mercury (*e.g.* the face-pot, goat and cockerel figurines)

appear to figure more often than those of other deities, but all the evidence suggests that Mercury was a ubiquitously useful patron in any case, whose multi-faceted spheres of activity attracted worship from all tiers of society. In addition, many of the beasts and birds thought to have been associated with Mercury could just as readily be associated with other deities. There is little reason to suppose this was a temple to Mercury specifically, nor indeed that it was dedicated to a singular deity; the multiple buildings of the earlier complex suggests that multiple dedications are possible.

Tantalisingly, the copper-alloy letter 'T' (SF2091) from a mid Roman phase of the precinct boundary ditch hints that there were written inscriptions that most probably alluded to the dedication of the temple. The survival and recovery of only a single character makes speculation futile. Letters also occur on other temple sites such as Ivy Chimneys (Turner 1999, 89 and fig.62) and Kelvedon (Rodwell, K.A. 1988, fig.47).

The various types of symbolic artefact that comprise this assemblage of 'objects of religious use' would seem to reflect a multifaceted set of beliefs, some or all of which were embodied in the worship of one or more deities at this religious focus. In essence, they appear to have been primarily native and concerned with fertility, well-being and fortune. As noted in the discussions regarding the identity of likely cults and deities at Ivy Chimneys, Witham (Turner 1999, 255–257) a number of indigenous and localised possibilities are suggested without necessarily being explicitly represented by the major native deities such as Silvanus or Teranis, or Roman ones such as Jupiter, Mars or Mercury. What is evident, and perhaps reassuring, is that we are probably seeing general *Trinovantian* religious belief in the broadly similar characters of votive assemblages from the vicinities of the religious sites at Heybridge, Kelvedon, Ivy Chimneys and perhaps also Chelmsford.

As already noted, the majority of these objects were found in settlement areas other than the temple precinct and its associated areas. Some forms of religious observance were no doubt carried out away from the sacred place, probably in the domestic setting of the dwelling. Thus, the general scatter of the religious objects may be presumed to reflect the distribution of their general use. Houses may well have contained small shrines that could have amounted to little more than shelves bearing religious statuary and offerings — the incidence of portable depictions of deities such as the pipe-clay Venus figurines brings this to mind.

In view of their wide distribution, the exact symbolism and use of the miniature items (*e.g.* the knife, terret, adze-hammer, spearhead, hammer, steelyard, axe, and ?sickle) is subject to speculation. Such items could be interpreted as talismans or charms carried around by individuals for good luck. It is notable that almost all appear to be miniature reproductions of tools, reflecting a range of agricultural and craft and perhaps commercial pursuits. Thus, they may denote the seeking of good fortune in the pursuance of particular tasks or trades, those examples that occur within the temple precinct perhaps being votive offerings with such an outcome in mind. The distribution of such votive objects, both within and without the sacred area, is further considered below.

Ritual deposition within the temple precinct
(Figs 6.10 and 6.11 and Tables 6.2–6.4)
There is virtually nothing to indicate the practise of ritual deposition in the vicinities of the Late Iron Age shrines, other than the single ceramic vessel inserted into the floor of shrine Building 8. Indeed, there is little to be detected until the start of the Roman period when, it appears, the digging of ritual pits began within the temple precinct. This is not to say that this sacred place saw no ritual practice, but that it did not entail the deposition of *durable* items. It is likely that the act of symbolic burial was simply not carried out here and that surface depositions of material, whether durable or not, were periodically cleared away and disposed of elsewhere. Indeed, the maintenance of the gravel surfaces that covered the precinct interior suggests that it was kept scrupulously clean into the mid Roman period.

It was only the development of a Roman pit digging and deposition practice that has preserved any potentially structured deposits within the precinct. These pits serve to record something of the nature of ritual practice and deposition largely from the late 1st century onwards. However, it is apparent that the quantity of artefactual material involved is by no means prolific. It is possible that the majority of offerings were hoarded, stored or displayed prior to their eventual removal from the precinct, or else that the level of ritual activity of this kind was never particularly intensive. The latter is perhaps more likely, given the general paucity of identifiably ritual objects elsewhere across the settlement (Table 6.2). As has already been conjectured in connection with the storage jar hearths in adjacent Area H, a significant proportion of offerings and deposits made at the temple could have been non-durable foodstuffs. Despite these *proviso*s, there are a number of features and deposits within the temple precinct that shed some light on the nature of ritual deposition, and therefore on religious practice. These span the early to late Roman periods and demonstrate the changing form of ritual activity during this time (Figs 6.10 and 6.11).

The earliest suggestion of deposition of votive material may be denoted by the small cluster of shallow pits to the west of Building 33, in what was the very rear of the sacred area. Of these, pits 13802 and 13560 (Group 175) contained sheep remains (largely mandibles) and a few metal objects that might have formed deliberate deposits. These were contemporary with, or supplemented by, the very large pit 13892 (Group 397, Fig. 3.5) within which a similar pattern of deposition of sheep and personal objects (small tools and jewellery) has been discerned (Table 6.2). This pit also contained a bone 'fist-and-phallus' amulet (SF4742) which adds weight to its identification as a place of ritual deposition.

There was a clear switch of focus of depositional practice from the rear of the temple to the front in the earlier 2nd century, although pit 13892 (Group 397) may still have been used for a time. This shift is represented by the inter-cutting cluster of nine, shallow, round to oval pits that occupied a prime position immediately to the north of the doorway of the second temple *cella*. The continued deposition of sheep offerings, denoted by the presence of mandibles in pits 5145, 5147, 5156, 13366, 13399 and 13401 (Group 398) indicates a continuity of practice from that in the earlier pit. The mandibles were now supplemented by chicken bones in pits 5145, 5147 and 13366, though whether this represents a new development

in religious activity is uncertain. Like pit 13892, this pit complex contained occasional offerings of personal items such as the knife, needle and hairpin. However, it is the pipe-clay Venus figurine (SF4717) in pit 13366 which is most *explicit* in its religious symbolism (Table 6.3).

The latest pit in the sequence, pit 5145, shows that this depositional episode persisted perhaps until the early 3rd century, by which time a further alteration to the format of these ritual deposits may be discerned in the inclusion of, what is for Heybridge, a large quantity of oyster shell. Indeed, the inclusion of chicken offerings may also be a later aspect of this ritual practice. This is perhaps supported by their further occurrence in a backfill of hexagonal pit 5588 within the temple *cella*. The pit was dug around plinth 5811, seemingly in association with its demolition, in the mid 2nd century. However, this was clearly not a simple case of destruction — the chicken deposit was likely a foundation offering inserted as the ground surface was consolidated before construction of a new wooden altar/shrine structure on the same spot.

As noted above, pit 5145 marked the final instalment of offerings placed close to the temple doorway. There followed another switch of location with apparent structured deposition now being focused upon the northern boundary of the temple precinct (Table 6.4).

The very location of these deposits is, of course, highly symbolic. The most conspicuous component of these pits is the recurrence of chicken bones, as Table 6.4 shows. Sheep deposits are also prevalent. First noted in the latest of the earlier pits in front of the temple, oyster shell was also a significant inclusion of these later peripheral deposits. As discussed elsewhere (Vol. 2, Section 4.4), the incidence of sizeable assemblages (*i.e.* over 1kg) is very limited within the settlement. Other than the temple precinct, only Area I is particularly noteworthy in this respect, probably due to its associated religious function. Areas I and J each accounted for 25% of all oyster by weight from excavated features (*i.e.* excluding layers and shell middens). Together, this material was derived from less than 25% of all oyster-bearing features excavated. The restricted distribution of oyster is highly suggestive of its structured deposition, perhaps as the remains of feasting but equally as a capping material in and over ritual features — possibly its white shells symbolised purity. The prime example of this is in the top of backfilled well 5394 (Group 432), the oyster deposit perhaps signifying the sealing of a once-sacred water source (unfortunately, the well was not fully excavated so that the nature of earlier use and deposition in its shaft was not established).

Area	Context	Type	SF no.	Feature	Period
Within the temple precinct and associated areas:					
H	6609	Pipeclay Venus figurine	3416	Unstrat.	0
	6281	Cu alloy letter	2347	Well 6280 (Group 531)	3–?
	6314	*Face pot – Mercury or Attis?*	-	*Ditch 6313 (Group 4001)*	*4-5*
	5427	Cu alloy miniature knife	2255	Cleaning layer	0
I	5601	Cu alloy bell	4761	Unstrat.	0
	13639	Ceramic phallus amulet	6093	Pit 6093 (Group 475)	3
	5228	Iron miniature spearhead	-	Cleaning layer	4–5
	5543	Cu alloy miniature terret	2281	Unstrat.	4–5
	13045	Iron pole tip	-	Road surface (Group 381)	3
J	5418	Cu alloy letter 'T'	2091	Ditch 5437 (Group 422)	4
	13291	Pipeclay Venus figurine	4717	Pit 13366 (Group 409)	3
	13388	Bone 'fist-and-phallus' amulet	4742	Pit 13892 (Group 397)	3
Other settlement areas:					
-	4000	Cu alloy stag figurine	811	Machining	0
	4000	*Silver boar? Figurine*	*961*	*Machining*	*0*
A1	4000	Cu alloy eagle wing	2504	Machining	0
	4000	Cu alloy miniature adze-hammer	2776	Machining	0
A2	11000	Cu alloy miniature spearhead	7210	Machining	0
	11000	Cu alloy pendant	7197	Machining	0
B	12253	Cu alloy mouse (& nut?) figurine	5738	Machining	0
D	9465	Cu alloy embossed plaque	4940	Pit 9464 (Group 805)	4
F	10293	Cu alloy phallus	3449	Layer (Group 2099)	2
	10335	Cu alloy miniature hammer?	5216	Ditch seg. 10657 (Group 838)	5–6
	24015	Pipeclay goddess figurine	8420	Unstrat.	0
M	24058	Cu alloy miniature steelyard	7813	Unstrat.	0
	24221	Cu alloy miniature axe	7966	Layer (Group 4027)	4–5
Q	17000	Cu alloy miniature ?sickle	7562	Unstrat.	0
R	12000	Cu alloy goat figurine	6365	Unstrat.	0
N	*11139*	*Cu alloy articulated leg*	*5806*	*Pit 10910*	*5*
X	*3999*	*Cu alloy cockerel figurine*	*8427*	*Spoilheap*	*0*

Note: *Italics* = uncertain ID as a votive object

Table 6.2 Distribution of votive objects
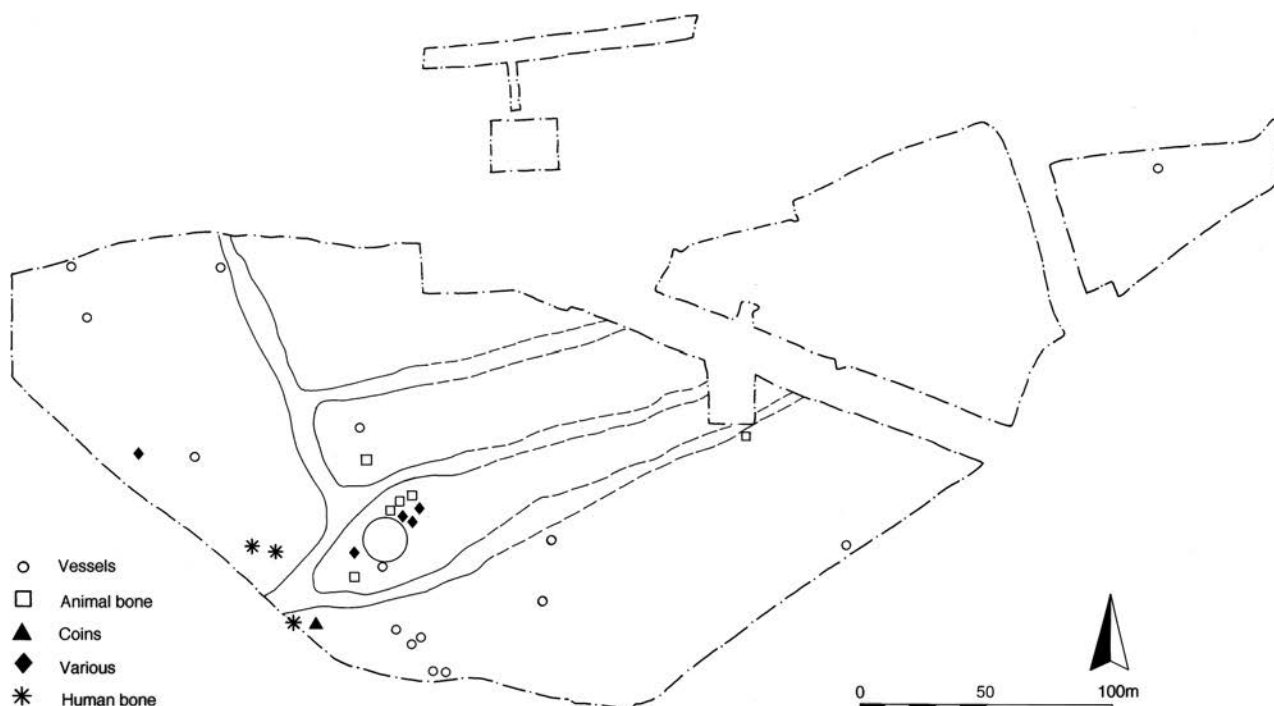
Figure 6.10 Distribution of early Roman votive/ritual deposits

Given the evidence of zoomorphic ritual in these peripheral features, it is possible that other artefacts were deposited in similar circumstances. Of note are the coins and personal items, but also the copper-alloy letter that can now be seen to come from a 'ritually meaningful' context. It thus seems possible that the hairpin, needle, bracelet and knife constitute the offering of individual possessions at the temple — although it is far from certain whether their inclusion in these peripheral pits would constitute primary deposition or secondary disposal, the latter perhaps resulting from cleaning of the temple or its precinct. It is

noted that these pits contained similar assemblages to structured deposits identified elsewhere across the settlement, but also that the high incidence of metalwork items was a diagnostic feature of late Roman deposits in general (see below).

Lastly, the deposition of coinage within the temple precinct appears to be a similarly late phenomenon, although this may reflect changing depositional, as much as votive, practice. As Peter Guest has observed in his discussion of the Elms Farm Roman coin assemblage, the abundance of 4th-century coins at temples show that the
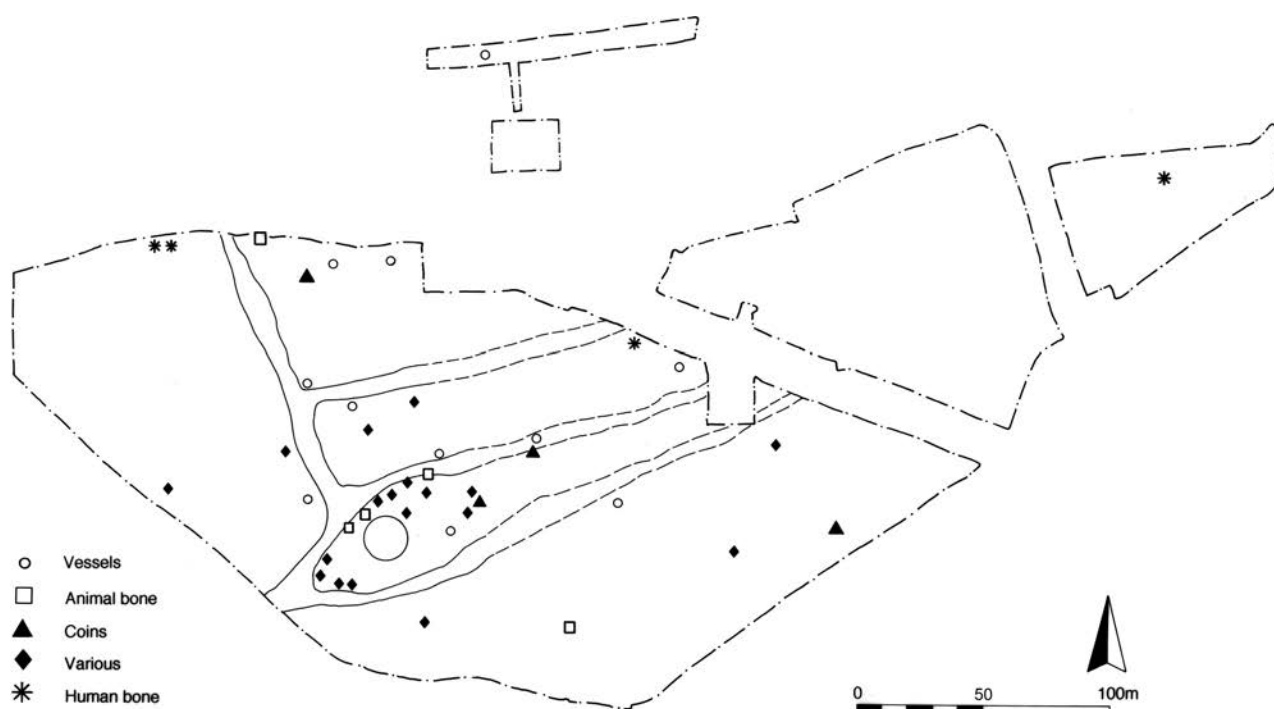
Figure 6.11 Distribution of later Roman votive/ritual deposits

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Feature	Group	Animal bone	Metalwork	Other	Position and ceramic date
18578	1000	-	-	Complete jar	Within Building 8, late 1st century BC
13560	175	Sheep	Brooch	-	Rear, early-mid 1st century
13552	175	-	-	-	Rear, LIA
13802	175	Sheep	-	-	Rear, mid 1st century
13892	397	Sheep	Needle, bracelet	Fist-and-phallus	Rear, mid 1st–early 2nd century
5145	430	Sheep, chicken	Stylus	4kg oyster shell	Front, late 2nd–mid 3rd century
5147	409	Sheep, chicken	Fe knife, needle		Front, *c.* AD 120–125 (KCG 21)
5156	409	Sheep	-	-	Front, late 1st–early 2nd century
5158	409	-	Hairpin	-	Front, late 1st–early 2nd century
5177	409	-	-	-	Front, early Roman
5206	409	-	-	-	Front, no artefacts recovered
13366	409	Sheep, chicken	-	Venus figurine, spindle whorl, near-complete jar	Front, late 1st–early 2nd century
13399	409	Sheep	-	-	Front, late 1st–early 2nd century
13401	409	Sheep	-	-	Front, Roman

Table 6.3 Deliberate deposits in temple precinct pits (Late Iron Age to early Roman periods)

Feature	Group	Animal bone	Metalwork	Other	Position & ceramic date
5026	438	-	-	0.9kg oyster	Precinct interior, Late Roman
5093	433	-	Brooch, tweezer	Hairpin	S. Boundary, mid Roman
5178	437	-	Stylus, bracelet	-	N. boundary, Late Roman
5179	442	Sheep	2 coins	Jet bracelet, face flagon mask	N. boundary, late 4th century
5180	443	Sheep	-	Oyster	N. boundary, late 4th century
5209	442	Sheep, chicken	20 coins, chisel, cleat, 17 nails, Pb waste	8kg oyster, glass bead	N. boundary, late 4th century
5232	427	-	1 coin?, chisel	Hairpin	NE corner of precinct, Late Roman
5282/5355	437	-	Fe blade	-	N. boundary, late 3rd–mid 4th century
5341	442	Chicken	-	-	N. boundary, Late Roman
5359	443	-	Nail cleaner, bars, needle, carpenters dog, cleat	Hairpin	N. boundary, Late Roman
5394	432	Sheep, chicken	Coin, hairpin, needle	20kg oyster	S. boundary, late 2nd–early 3rd century
5437/5928	422	Sheep, chicken	Coin, letter 'T', key	Oyster	N. boundary, mid 2nd–mid 3rd century
5509	442	-	5 coins	-	N. boundary, late 4th century
5524	420	Chicken	Key	-	N. boundary, late 2nd century +
5545	435	Sheep, chicken	Knife	-	N. boundary, mid–late 4th century
5736	444	Sheep	Fe 'collar'	-	N. boundary, mid–late 4th century
5805	444		2 coins, hook, 2 chisels, 82 nails, fe blade, key, latchlifter	Hairpin	N. boundary, Late Roman
5940	420	Chicken	Fe blade	Glass bead, bone counter	N. boundary, 3rd century
13084	432	Sheep, chicken	-	1.6kg oyster	S. boundary, late 2nd–mid 3rd century
21801	440	-	1 coin, mirror frag	Stone and tile packing	E. of precinct entrance, late 4th century, 4th century
21975	5009	-	2 coins	-	E. of precinct entrance, late 4th century
22210	448	-	63 coins, Fe knife, cu alloy personal items	3 shale bracelets	E. of precinct entrance, late 4th century
22062	5007	-	-	3 shale bracelets	E. of precinct entrance, late 4th century
21745	5008	-	-	Complete tazza bowl	SE precinct (under/in Building 64?), later 4th century

Table 6.4 Deliberate deposits in temple precinct (mid to late Roman periods)

coins were available, but that they were being used for specific purposes by the late Roman period (Vol. 2, Section 3.5). One clear purpose was that of votive offering, rather than of market transaction. Thus, late coins do not generally appear in quantity on other, non-religious sites. Guest's analysis shows that the temple precinct did not produce many coins of the 1st or 2nd centuries. While there was an increase in the 3rd century, most arrived after AD 330 when the temple precinct became by far the most significant coin area. Clearly, the late 4th- and early 5th-century coins formed a part of the repertoire of votive objects used, as is the case at other late Roman temples. In this, Heybridge displays similar patterning to the temple at Chelmsford and the shrine/temple at Great Dunmow. Votive, as opposed to commercial, use of coins extended beyond temples to other forms of structured deposit such as those in wells, and the hoards that are increasingly found across settlement areas during the late Roman period. This aspect of their wider votive use is discussed below. However, within the temple precinct, coin deposition was concentrated along the northern boundary, mirroring the distribution of other types of votive objects and offerings (Fig. 6.11). Although many of the latest coins were metal detected from the homogenous roadside silts that overlay and presumably filled the boundary pits, it is clear in retrospect that these were part of the same depositional episode.

III. Structured deposition
(Table 6.5)

It has already been established in the preceding discussion of the temple complex that the practice of structured deposition was clearly not restricted to the confines of its precinct. The casting of coins and personal items of jewellery into well 22210 (Group 448), immediately outside the temple precinct, is an obvious case in point. However, there is a large number of other occurrences of structured deposition, of a broadly similar nature, from across the settlement, the majority of which are apparently unassociated with the religious locus.

Following Hill (1995) it has become commonplace to expect and discuss 'deliberate' or 'structured' deposits, especially in Iron Age contexts. It is also becoming more common to see Romano-British material culture discussed in this way (*e.g.* Fulford 2001). This change in attitude has brought with it the realisation that this was not a rural or lower-status settlement phenomenon, as such deposits are increasingly being recognised during the course of excavations within some of the more highly *Romanised* centres (*e.g.* Silchester Insula IV; M. Fulford, pers. comm.).

It is not considered entirely appropriate (or feasible) by the authors to adopt wholeheartedly Hill's premise that all rubbish deposits potentially have aspects of structuring and symbolism to their disposal, particularly for the rich and diverse cultural assemblages of the Roman period. However, it is instructive to consider the circumstances of their deposition, their nature and composition and their distribution in time and space. From this, it is clear that within the apparently diverse range of deposits, there are a number of identifiable trends that can be used to interpret the various uses and meanings of this general religio-superstitious practice. Indeed, consideration of the likely

function of many deposits suggests that they may be more accurately viewed as denoting religio-*magical* practices within Late Iron Age and Romano-British society.

Only the more obvious of these deliberately constructed assemblages can be recognised: the complete or near-complete ceramic vessels, conspicuously large numbers of coins or other metalwork, and highly selective or articulated animal bones. Subtle patterns of deliberate deposition can be extremely difficult to identify in material-rich settlements such as Heybridge. The majority of these assemblages were not recognised until post-excavation analysis with the result that their contextual detail is often severely lacking. While the broad content and location of these deposits can be reconstructed, little can be said about the internal structuring, or juxta-positioning, of their constituent parts. Conversely, we must also acknowledge that we may sometimes be too eager to identify 'ritual deposits' and thus wrongly identify random occurrences and chance survivals (*e.g.* single complete vessels, articulated bone) as such. This is particularly true in post-excavation analysis when perceived patterning is given wider significance.

The types of special deposit identified at Elms Farm include (Table 6.5):

- human bone (other than formal burials);

- animal bone deposits (articulated or unusual collections of);

- complete or near complete artefacts; sometimes multiple (*e.g.* ceramic vessels);

- carefully selected token assemblages (often in association with the above).

Each of these recognised categories is discussed below, though in some instances the structured deposits consist of more than one of these — as would perhaps be expected. Even within these groupings there is considerable variation that includes circumstance of burial. Note that a distinction between 'pit' and 'cut' has been made; 'pit' is used to indicate deposition within a pre-existing feature, often as a secondary act, while 'cut' denotes the creation of a new hole specifically to accept a structured assemblage. A further circumstance is that of horizontal and vertical positioning within a feature. Given the limitations of the recording, general positioning such as 'top', 'middling', 'bottom', 'central' and 'end', have been used for characterisation purposes within this study.

Ceramic vessels
The deposition of complete or near-complete ceramic vessels is the most numerous and obvious class of structured deposit at Elms Farm. The pottery-specific aspects of their 'ritual' use have been discussed elsewhere (Biddulph Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.10), but it is appropriate here to consider the context of their deposition more fully and to offer interpretation with reference to other material often found in association. Either complete on excavation, or else recognised as clearly comprising pieces of a complete pot when deposited, these vessels were found in a variety of features and are perhaps the most useful starting point for the examination of structured deposition at Elms Farm. Generally, only vessels for which the majority was recovered are considered here. No doubt the half-sectioning, rather than full excavation, of features

Area	Feature (Group)	Fill	Position	Structured material	Associated material?	Period
N	Ditch 0882 (G145)	10881	Single, end	?animal bone 2kg	Loomweight	2
P	Pit 8594 (G222)	8596	Top	Near-complete jar (perforated)	-	2
Q	Well 17155 (G86)	17070	Middling	Complete jar, perforated	-	2a
I	Post-hole 13167 (G184)	13171	Single	Human neonate bones; inc. skull, arm, pelvis, femur	-	2b
K	Layer (G750)	4993	Single	Several human bones, poss. from one foetal/neonate	-	2b (3?)
F	Ditch 10159 (G361)	10182	Bottom	Near-complete bowl (decorated & ?curated)	Fe collar (SF2213), glass?, 5kg tile	3
K	Cut 4148	4148	Single	2 samian bowls, GROG lid, LIA potin (SF450) c.50–20BC	GROG jar	3
K	Cut 4458 (G755)	4458, 4464	Single	Near-complete bowl	7kg bone, incl. whole scapulae	3
K	Pit 4526 (G729)	4579	Bottom	Once-complete storage jar (holed?)	-	3
K	Pit 4048 (G756)	4682	Bottom	Complete beaker	-	3
K	Foundation 4812 (G723)	4813	Single	1 coin (64–68)	- (part of Building 39)	3
L	Pit 14579 (G711)	14589	Middling	Pedestal vessel (deliberate breakage?)	-	3
L	Cut 20008 (G708)	20009	Single	11 complete ceramic vessels, 3 near-complete vessels	Lava quern fragments	3
W	Ditch 401/ 568 (G890)	404, 567	Middling	2 pairs of pierced jars	-	3
H	Cut 6539 (G518)	6538, 6522	'single'	Cattle jaws	-	3a
D	Well 9421 (G772)	9895	Bottom	Complete jar, cow skull	Scapulae & vertebrae, glass vessel handle, shoe sole, wooden item	3b
I	Pit 13469 (G611)	13470	Bottom	Near-complete dish		3b/4
I	Layer (G600)	13568	Single	1 human neonate bone	Brooch, bsm bead	3b
K	Pit 4182 (G3034)	4184	Top	?Miniature/small dish	-	3b–4
D	Pit 9014 (G783)	9005, 9164	Top	Complete jar and dish	-	3b
D	Pit 9270 (G783)	9271	Top	Near-complete storage jar	-	3b
D	Ditch 9658 (G3063)	9672	Upper	Near-complete mortarium	-	3–4
F	Pit 10091 (G830)	10090	Single	Articulated animal bone	-	4
G	Pit 7270 (G867)	7272	Bottom	Jar	-	4
G	Slot 7766 (G856)	7535	'single'	Complete beaker	- (in wall of Building 54)	4
H	Pit 6267 (G561)	6268	Upper	Near-complete dish & beaker	17kg tile, quern fragments	4
H	Ditch 6313 (G4001)	6314	Top	Near complete beaker, 'Mercury' face pot sherd	-	4
H	Well 6280 (G531)	16083	Bottom	4 dishes (inc. 2 samian) and a near-complete jar	15kg bone, incl butchery waste, leather shoes, rope, quern fragment	4
H	Pit 16149 (G559)	16107	Single	Complete jar	-	4
M	Pit 15271 (G468)	15272, 15280	Top & Bottom	2 human neonate bones	Bone needle	4
M	Cut 15368 (G696)	15369	Single	Bronze flagon	-	4
N	Pit 23012 (G694)	23087	Upper	Complete bowl-jar and beaker (with 'X' graffito), Articulated animal spine	quern, tile	4
Q	Pit /post-hole 17038 (G948)	17037	'single'	2 human infant bones	Quern fragments	4
R	Ditch 12027 (G968)	12026, 12029	Single, End	2 Complete beakers	iron objects, tile ?pedestals	4
L	Post-hole 20468 (G4020)	20469	Single	Part face-flagon	-	4–5
G	Foundation 7069 (G878)	7068	Single	1 coin (300-399)	- (part of Building 58)	5
H	Pit 16263 (G566)	16262	Single	Near-complete beaker	6kg tile	5
K	Pit 4943 (G739)	4925	Upper	1 human neonate bone, articulated animal bone?	15.6kg bone, metal objects, bone tool (SF5702)	5
L	Cut 6383 (G843)	6382	Single	75 coins (latest 260–290)	Tile capping	5

Area	Feature (Group)	Fill	Position	Structured material	Associated material?	Period
L	Well 14984 (G710)	20034	Bottom	4+ dogs, 1 pig, 1 piglet, 1 cow; all complete	15kg tile, key, 2 quern fragments	5
L	Post-hole 20386 (G458)	20387	Single	1 coin (260–290)	-	5
N	Pit 10910 (G676)	10877	Top	Near-complete dish	Ironwork, jet pin (other stuff in fill 10891)	5
P	Pit 8555 (G675)	8554	Lower	10 coins (latest 347–348)	1.8kg tile, 90 pot sherds	5
H	Cut 6641 (G579)	6640	Bottom	5 pewter vessels (inc. chi-ro), 1 articulated horse (headless)	Tile capping.	6
M	Slot 15688 (G472)	15689	Single	Early Saxon jar	-	6
F	Ditch 25027 (G838)	10296, 10361, 10337	Upper	Complete flagon, beaker & bowl-jar, 2 faces, 43 coins	Metalwork – inc. waste & jewellery, quern fragments	5–6
D	Ditch 9381 (G834)	9861, 9382	Single	Near-complete jar	Fe blade	5–6
E	Cut 8142 (G836)	8141	Single	Articulated human arm, 1 coin (138–180)	3kg animal bone, 5.4kg tile, glass bead, pot, vessel glass frag, 14 nails	5–6
E	Cut 8155 (G836)	8153	Single	Human skull (inc. mandible)	glass frags	5–6
G	Ditch 7085	7086	Single	Near-complete beaker	1 coin, 9kg slag, 11kg tile, quern fragments	5–6

Table 6.5 Identified structured deposits (outside the temple complex)

such as pits affected the recovery of some whole vessels that may have been crushed and spread over time.

Deliberately holed and chipped or broken vessels (*i.e.* the 'killed-pot' phenomenon) are not considered here in detail. Few of the holed vessels are likely to have been created for ritual purposes and deliberate breakage is very difficult to identify confidently outside grave contexts. Having said this, there are some examples of probably deliberately damaged vessels in special deposits — the clearest being from ditch 25274 (Group 89) and from amongst the large assemblage of pots in pit 20008 (Group 708). The issues of holed and broken ceramic vessels receive further attention in Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.9.

In some ways, the deposition of small single vessels seems similar to the deposition of infant remains: they both appear to have had close associations with buildings. The jar in small pit 18578 (Group 17) was inserted into or under the floor of one of the Late Iron Age shrines (Building 8), while the beaker in context 7535 (Group 359) was built into a wall foundation during the construction of roadside Building 54.

Ceramic vessels deposited in pre-existing cut features such as pits, ditches and wells comprise the majority. Single or paired vessel occurrences have been recorded from such features, although multiple occurrences are particularly noted in ditches. A number of complete (or once complete, but damaged by horizontal truncation) vessels were initially identified and excavated as potential isolated cremations cut into pits that occupied relatively peripheral settlement locations (*e.g.* pit 9014/Group 783, Area D). However, grave cuts could not be discerned and neither the vessels nor their immediate vicinities yielded any trace of cremated bone. Instead, such pots appear to have been inserted, upright, into the tops of these infilled rubbish pits. Indeed there are relatively few instances of complete vessels being found at the bottom or at appreciable depths within such pits. Perhaps the initial interpretation of these deposits as cremation burials reflects their intended similarity with this form of burial assemblage and, by inference, with its associated rites.

The location of vessels within ditches is subtly different to those within pits. They generally occurred in middling positions and often on their sides, as if inserted during the backfilling of these features; rarely is there any degree of complex fill stratigraphy around or over such deposits. Deposition in ditches almost inevitably has connotations of peripheral and boundary location significance and symbolism. A good example of boundary deposition is found in ditch 25274 (Group 89), previously mentioned in connection with deliberate vessel damage. Excavation of what was a significant marker of the divide between peripheral settlement activity and the agricultural hinterland, revealed two sets of similar deposits in two segments across it. These comprised two pairs of greyware vessels laid in middling positions within the feature, apparently during backfilling. This example serves to show that sequences of structured deposits may have been inserted into the ditch at intervals, perhaps at what were perceived to be key points along its length. It also reveals that there may have been a degree of conformity or regularity in certain types of deposit — at least at certain times. A similar occurrence of paired ceramic vessels and lamps from Orpington in Kent (Merrifield 1987, 38), indicates that this is a recurring, though perhaps seldom recognised, phenomenon.

Single complete vessels in wells, though a common occurrence, are more problematical. Vessels were often present in the lower fills of these features but could be given the non-ritualistic explanation of casual (or mischievous?) loss. The presence of water and soft silts at the bottom of these shafts would help lessen the impact and aid the long-term survival of vessels dropped into them and, together with difficulties of access, deter retrieval. However, the complete jar at the bottom of well 9421 (Group 772) was accompanied by a cow skull and other items of potential significance. Thus, casual loss *during* well-use could easily be discounted in favour of votive practice marking disuse and the onset of infilling (whether gradual, opportunistic or immediate). However, if this did constitute a ritual observance, it was rarely, if

ever, repeated either during concerted backfilling or disuse accumulation as no further complete vessels (or other ritual material) were found higher in the well shafts as is the case elsewhere, such as at the Chelmsford *mansio* (Drury 1988, Well F31, 19–20).

Thus, a subtly different practice is noted for wells than for pits — the latter tending to contain ceramic votive material in their top fills. As may be indicated by the Chelmsford *mansio* example, shafts are perhaps another distinct class of feature used for ritual purposes and that, on their disuse, deep wells could become ritual 'shafts' (*i.e.* recut and reused a number of times for the purpose of structured deposition). However, no such shafts or shaft-converted wells were identified at Elms Farm, although pit 6641 (Group 579), with its deposit of pewter bowls, may come close.

Deposition of ceramic vessels was not restricted to pre-existing features; some occupied small pits specifically cut to accommodate them. In some respects, these included the more unusual or larger groups of ceramics. As has been discussed elsewhere, the occurrence of two decorated samian bowls in deposit 4148 (Group 732) is apparently without parallel in Britain (Brenda Dickinson, pers. comm.) although Merrifield noted the finding of two samian bowls in a ditch at 201–211 Borough High Street, Southwark, London (Merrifield 1987, 37).

Another noteworthy deposition occurs in cut 20008 (Group 708), with its fourteen complete or near-complete vessels, mainly comprising black surfaced ware jars, bowls, a platter, beaker, flagon and a lid. These deposits are not obviously associated with specific buildings and thus cannot be considered as foundation deposits. Elsewhere, such collections of pottery have been termed 'use deposits', denoting the view that they were worn domestic assemblages deposited wholesale rather than being made up of selected items. A similar, larger, deposit of ceramics at Woodham Walter, albeit in a ditch, was originally interpreted as non-ritual, perhaps the result of some unspecified calamity (Rodwell 1987, 38–9). Its ritual possibilities were later recognised as a probable closure deposit (Wallace 1989, 172). A further example may be found in the deposition of a total of forty-three vessels in a pit at Farningham in Kent (Merrifield 1987, 49). The pots were deemed to be the latest on the site and interpreted as an abandonment ritual around the time of the conquest, perhaps in response to crisis (the conquest itself?). It is further postulated here that such groups are the result of clearing out personal domestic assemblages. The reason for this can only be speculation, but clearance may signify change within the domestic dwelling from which they derived — occupants moving on, the house being rebuilt, or the death of the owner — rather than the disuse of the feature in which the items have been placed.

As noted by Biddulph (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.10), there appears to have been a general preference for closed forms, principally jars and then beakers. The relative proportions of vessels employed in structured deposits (Vol. 2, Table 49) broadly parallels that of general supply and use and perhaps emphasises the intimate nature of the inter-relationship of beliefs and the practicalities of daily life. This is seemingly confirmed by the high proportion of locally produced wares represented. Cups are absent, with other open forms such as bowls and mortaria in a clear minority. This must surely inform as to the nature of the

rituals involved and hint at the presence of non-durable 'offerings' being made within ceramic containers such as jars. In terms of pottery constituents, such structured deposits can be seen to differ markedly from burials where 'high-status' vessels of wider variety, form and origin were used as grave goods. Exceptions may be found in the samian bowls of deposit 4148 (Group 732) and the later Roman use of face-pots — particularly the specific inclusion of the face masks rather than the complete vessels (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.4.8) — but generally ceramic vessels were deposited as containers or receptacles rather than as offerings in their own right.

Human bone
Other than in funerary features, the incidence of human bone was low across the settlement area with only eight examples being identified (Duhig, Vol. 2, Section 4.5). The majority comprise the remains of neonates and infants and tend to occur within, or in association with, structural features interpreted as building foundations. The range of bones in post-hole 13167, comprising skull, humerus, pelvis, and femur, suggests the insertion of a complete neonate into a structural feature. The post-hole may mark one side of the doorway of a tentative roundhouse, Building 23.

Layer 4993 (Group 750) was a deposit overlying infilled pits that was associated with the preparation of the ground ahead of the construction of Building 39. The neonate remains recovered may have been included in this layer at the time of its deposition. However, it must be conceded that they may have occupied an unrecognised cut of their own that had been inserted later into the floor of Building 39. Whichever the case, it remains apparent that this burial of neonate remains, like that in post-hole 13167, was closely associated with Building 23.

The occurrences of occasional or single neonate bones, are probably the remains of disturbed burials or 'ritual inclusions' from elsewhere in the vicinity. While it is possible that the paucity of skeletal material was due to poor survival or low recognition and recovery rates, it is equally likely that rubbish pits did not constitute appropriate places for interment of human remains. Nevertheless, the link between neonate burials and domestic buildings is widely recorded in Roman Britain. This surely says something about the way in which infant death and the disposal of remains was perceived. While neonates do not seem to have been given a formal burial (except when interred with the mother), they were certainly not treated in the same way as animal remains. Something of a broad parallel may have existed in the disposal of dog remains. It is clear that, like dogs, neonates had a 'half-way' status, being regarded as neither fully fledged individuals nor common animals. As such, infants may have been considered pure and uncorrupted by the profane world they had only recently entered. This may then have made them ideal symbolic, perhaps even magical, offerings to gods and spirits.

Only two examples of human remains, from pits 8142 and 8145 (Group 836), are from adults. They comprise the remains of an articulated arm and a skull, probably from the same individual. These are clearly very different deposits from those of the neonates discussed above, Their close association and careful arrangement in apparently purpose-made pits suggests that they had affinities as much with inhumation burial as with the kind

of 'ritual deposits' under consideration here. As such, aspects of these features are also discussed in Chapter 7.

Animal bone

Often a primary indicator of special deposition for the Early and Middle Iron Age periods elsewhere in southern Britain (*e.g.* Danebury), the incidence of recognised special animal bone groups was low at Heybridge. Only a single case of a complete animal burial was excavated. This was the burial or grave of an old dog in mid Roman pit 6152 (Group 552), in Area H. No further incidences of animal graves occurred within the excavated areas of the settlement or its hinterland.

However, study of the bone assemblage has revealed twenty-six examples of part- or wholly articulated animals (Johnstone and Albarella, Vol. 2, Section 4.2) that are deemed to be in non-burial contexts. These seem to fall into two groups: casual discards and recognisably ritual depositions. Although not specifically relevant to this discussion of ritual behaviour, it is interesting to note that the larger group, the casual discards, comprises almost wholly of dogs (eight dogs, one pig, one cow). This seems to suggest that the butchery, consumption and secondary product utilisation of the major food animals (*i.e.* cow, sheep and pig) was very thorough and rarely allowed for the discard of articulated material. Dogs, on the other hand, not being a food source, are perhaps disproportionately represented by articulated remains. These largely comprise limbs and may indicate that, by and large, dogs were unceremoniously disposed of in pits, possibly already having been subject to the attentions of scavengers. However, it remains possible that some of these may only have been the excavated portions of what were complete skeletons in half-sectioned pits.

Although most articulated dog remains were non-ritual in nature, this was not exclusively so. The later Roman back-fills of well 14984 (Group 710), in Area L, contained the skeletons of four dogs, a cow, a pig and a young piglet. These animal remains formed the main component of the deposit which otherwise contained relatively little pottery and a small quantity of rubble in the form of tile and quern fragments. Capped with a thick deposit of clean clay, the significance of this deposit is a little ambiguous. Instead of a ritual interpretation it is possible to regard it as the disposal of coincidentally deceased animals from the late settlement environs. However, in the opinion of the authors, the quantity and range of animals represented would seem to argue against this more mundane explanation. As is discussed further in the following section on funerary practice (Chapter 7) the 3rd and 4th centuries saw a development at Heybridge of what is termed 'bizarre' depositional practice. The animal deposits in redundant well 14984 (Group 710) are viewed as a part of this.

Latest Roman pit 6641 (Group 579), in Area H, is most notable for the group of pewter vessels deposited within it (see below). However, just as startling was the inclusion of a *headless* horse. This is clearly a highly unusual occurrence as, where present, these animals are usually represented by the entire carcass or else the head alone (*e.g.* Drury 1988, 19–20). While it is presumed that the head was removed as part of the rites that accompanied the deposition, it can only be speculated that it was perhaps used as a marker over the backfilled feature.

It is notable that placed deposits of chicken or sheep bones have not been identified outside the religious complex. It could be concluded that this reflects specific practice restricted to the temple precinct and that the nature of structured animal deposits was in some way different across the rest of the settlement (presumably less 'sacred'). Instead, it is suspected that the visibility and recognition of these deposits has been compromised by excavation and collection biases, together with the problem of identifying, during analysis, previously unobserved or unrecorded articulation within this extensive assemblage.

Coins

(Table 6.6)

The majority of stratified coins found in features almost certainly did not constitute deliberate deposition. As displayed by Table 6.6, the bulk of these were recovered as single examples. Furthermore, few features contained more than one coin-yielding fill. Although it is difficult to be sure about the depositional circumstance of single coins, it is to be expected that a significant proportion of those lost casually upon the ground surface would have been redeposited in the infill of a cut feature sooner or later. The recovery of approximately 3,000 Iron Age and Roman coins from deposits (including the topsoil and cleaning layers) would suggest that this was an inevitable consequence of the repeated cutting and filling of such features as rubbish pits and ditches. Although perhaps less frequent, the same is true of coin deposition in smaller cut features such as post-holes of which over 3,100 were excavated at Elms Farm. A good example of this may be found in the incidence of Roman coins in two of the sixty-three excavated post-holes that comprise post-medieval fence-line Structure 59. In this instance, there is no question of coin deposition being deliberate and, due to the lack of settlement activity between the 5th and 18th centuries, this post-medieval activity would have differed little from similar pit or post-hole digging carried out during the later Roman period. This, then, demonstrates the relative ease and inevitability in which coins incidentally find their way into features on an intensively occupied site. Regardless of feature type, coins were occasionally redeposited within them during the process

	1 coin	2 coins	3-4 coins	5–9 coins	10+ coins	Totals
Pits	54	10	2	2	3	71
Ditches	25	2	3	1	1	32
Post-holes	22	2	0	0	0	24
Other structure	6	1	0	0	0	7
Wells	3	2	0	0	2*	7
Totals	**110**	**17**	**5**	**3**	**6**	**141**

Table 6.6 Quantification of fills containing coins

of infilling. Table 6.6 demonstrates that the frequency of this was largely a reflection of the number and relative capacity of features. Hence, approximately half of the singly occurring coins came from pits — the most numerous and generally largest of feature types (coin collection from the ditches really only amounted to collection from 1m long excavated segments, at most).

Putting the problematic issue of the nature of single coin deposition aside, there are clearly a number of large and distinct groups of coins that are best discussed in terms of structured deposition. For this report, a very robust approach has been taken in the identification of structured deposition as evidenced by coins. In isolation, only fills with five or more coins have been selected for study. However, fewer numbers of coins from multiple fills of the same feature have been combined in appreciation of their likely grouping or cumulative value. This approach works adequately for large features such as ditches and pits, but not for structural features of much smaller capacity. In the case of post-holes, beam slots and other foundation cuts, in which any multiple coin incidence is rare, a more subjective, qualitative approach is necessitated. For such features, an appreciation of context and other indicators of structured deposition is vital to recognition of these coins as similarly deliberate inclusions.

Unfortunately, very few of the identified 'special' deposits of coins coincided with that of other artefacts. Only four such instances are apparent: two involved complete ceramic vessels (4148/Group 732, 25027/Group 838), one human articulation (8142/Group 836) and one deposit of jewellery/cosmetic tools (22210/Group 448). Indeed, this is almost the only way the presence of single coins can be identified as deliberate inclusions (other than conspicuous presence in structural features; see below).

Massed coinage, or assemblages generally termed 'hoards', are the most easily recognised form of deliberate deposition. Five such potential occurrences have been identified, although the majority of these are clearly not 'hoards' in the accepted sense, *i.e.* 'a single act of deposition of materials of monetary or intrinsic value with the intention of recovery at a later date' (Treasure Act 1996). Only one deposit, that in pit 6383, qualifies as a hoard, comprising seventy-five late Roman coins (Vol. 2, Section 3.5) buried in a purpose-made cut that was capped with tile. Pits 8555 (Group 675) and 5209 (Group 442) both contained smaller collections of coinage. It is not clear if these came from specific locations within the features but were, at least, restricted to their top fills. The coins formed cohesive *date blocks* (*c.* AD 330s-340s and *c.* AD 330s-400s respectively) and the fill of 8555 (Group 675) was also notable for an uncharacteristically restricted range and low quantity of 'rubbish' than generally expected from late Roman pits. This suggests that these modest coin assemblages may have been deposited in a rite of termination that was not dissimilar to the insertion of single ceramic vessels seen elsewhere across the site. However, it remains possible, though highly unusual, that collections of small denomination coinage could have entered pits in an altogether less structured manner — being part of the general rubbish deposited in them.

In spite of this, there are clear indications that some relatively disparate coin groups accompanied by large amounts of apparent domestic and craft waste were deposited in an intentional and structured manner. The best example of this is the assemblage in late Roman ditch 25027 (Group 838). Here, forty-three coins largely dating to the 330s were recovered from the eastern end of what was a major boundary in the late Roman settlement. In addition to the coins, this feature yielded a range of ceramic and metalwork items that support the identification of a structured component within the artefact assemblage, the most significant being a copper-alloy miniature hammer (SF5216). Such large and varied deposits are perhaps the most ambiguous in terms of the interpretation of their formation. However, it does appear that, in the late Roman period, major ditches attracted the same kind of votive deposits as pits.

It is difficult to assess how many of the coins were purposefully included along with other structured deposits — particularly those in purpose-made cuts. While the potin coin, pair of samian bowls and GROG lid in fill 4148 (Group 732) are likely to have been deposited together, the coin (SF1378) accompanying the articulated arm in pit 8142 (Group 836) is apparently residual — unless deposition of heirlooms or curiosities is to be posited.

Deposition of coins into wells does not seem to have been practised, although it is difficult to recover small objects from waterlogged fills so the possibility of well deposition should not be totally dismissed. Only well 22210 (Group 448) contained such a structured deposit — though only by a technicality: the well had clearly ceased to function and the coins had been thrown into a shallow pool that formed in its top. As discussed earlier, this was a late phenomenon associated with the temple usage. The pool became a 'wishing well', ideally situated just outside the temple precinct entrance. This focus of votive deposition seems to have attracted further structured deposition with nearby 'post-holes' 21801 (Group 440) and 21975 (Group 5009) containing smaller collections of artefacts that mirror the composition of the well/pool assemblage (*i.e.* coins and jet/shale bracelets). Perhaps these small cuts are better regarded as individual ritual pits and may help explain why there was a proliferation of these features (mostly unexcavated) in front of the temple complex.

A further expression of the structured use of coinage is seen in their conspicuous presence in structural features such as the wall foundation cuts of Buildings 39 and 58 and, possibly, of temple precinct wall Structure 46. That coins occur within the sterile fills of structural features, is an indication that they were deposited as foundation offerings; presumably in much the same way as the neonate remains and small ceramic vessels inserted into walls and floors.

Metalwork

Metalwork, particularly on a settlement with intense and complex occupation from the 1st century AD onwards, is difficult to assess in terms of its deliberate deposition. This is especially true of relatively small, durable and possibly valuable (intrinsically or symbolically) items such as coins, brooches and other personal items such as jewellery. The issue of residuality versus curation or prolonged circulation and use is a key one. In cases where artefacts in the backfill are not much older than those in the deliberately structured deposit another term should be used: 'incidental inclusion'.

As the Roman period proceeded, metalwork proliferated across the settlement. This is clearly evident in the assemblages of mid and late Roman pits. What should we make of the high incidence of nails, implements, fragments of jewellery and even cast waste, particularly when it accompanies more obvious deliberate inclusions of objects such as massed coins (*e.g.* ditch 25027/Group 838)? Perhaps the most productive way to investigate the structured deposition of metalwork is to highlight the most obvious examples at Heybridge. The list of conspicuous metalwork deposits comprises only two instances, with the great majority of items not deemed votive objects *per se* but only being identified through their association with other artefacts or assemblages of a distinctly structured nature.

The later date of the deposition of metallic vessels may be significant. The copper-alloy flagon in pit 15368 (Group 696) is of particular interest (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.4.5.3), as it would seem to have been relatively old when buried; although this may merely reflect the generally long life of fine metal vessels without it necessarily constituting an 'heirloom'. In this case, the shallow rectangular pit seems purpose-made and the virtual absence of other artefactual material in its fill suggests that the deposition of the flagon was its sole function. The symbolism and function of the feature is not clear for it is neither an obvious foundation nor closure deposit. Perhaps it has affinities with the burial of 'use-deposits' of ceramic vessels, as previously described. Within the region, copper-alloy flagons generally occur in burial contexts, the closest being from a probable burial of mid 1st-century date at The Towers cemetery, Heybridge (Wickenden 1986, 55–6). Another example comes from a rich 2nd-century burial at Stansted Airport (Havis and Brooks 2004). Crummy (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.4.5.3) also considers the context of foot-handle jugs both in Britain and on the continent and has identified two trends: one of such jugs being deposited in graves, the other as votive offerings linked with water. An example from Corbridge, Northumberland, is perhaps the closest parallel. It is possible the Elms Farm example parallels the burial rite as has been suggested for complete jars inserted into the tops of pits.

The second instance of deposition of metalwork is somewhat different from that of the 'flagon burial'. Pit 6641 (Group 579) was originally thought to be a well due to the shaft-like qualities of its cut. Toward the bottom, below the water table, a group of five pewter bowls and dishes (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.4.5.2) had been deposited and the shaft rapidly backfilled, a tile capping being laid over the vessels. The deposition of pewter vessels has clear ritual connotations, as evidenced by two bowls at the late Roman shrine 273 at Great Dunmow (Wickenden 1988; 38, 44) and further afield at such places as Hockwold cum Wilton (Gurney 1986, 92). The well/shaft-like qualities of the feature are noteworthy, also its wetness and relative depth at which the pewter vessels were buried. Clearly, in contrast to the majority of structured deposits, depth of burial — and thus inaccessibility — was an important part of this act. While the majority of the backfill contained what appears to be mundane rubbish, the profile of the cut itself suggests that this was not the fortuitous use of a convenient pit but deposition within a purpose-made 'shaft'. This view is perhaps strengthened by the presence of a headless horse inserted with, or just above, the pewter deposit (see animal deposits, above). The incidence of a *chi-rho* on the underside of one of the bowls adds a further dimension to this deposit. The significance of this Christian symbolism in this particular context is difficult to determine. One interpretation may be the secreting or hoarding of liturgical equipment; another interpretation could be pagan ritual use in ignorance or appreciation of the symbol.

The deposition of copper-alloy and pewter vessels is relatively easily recognised. More problematical is the ritual use of *non-vessel* artefacts that do not possess an overtly religious connotation — particularly smaller objects of copper alloy, iron, lead and occasionally silver, such as jewellery, toilet implements, tools and perhaps even scrap or waste material. Many of these have a distribution across the whole settlement area and the incidence of their votive use is difficult to identify beyond that of presence alongside less equivocal structured deposits, particularly those within the temple precinct. However, some speculation is possible.

As the deposit from 'pool' 22210 (Group 448) shows, jewellery, such as bracelets, was commonly used. Ditch 25027 (Group 838) also contained bracelets, finger rings and the occasional brooch. These were generally found in small quantities and may represent the deposition of single personal items by a number of individuals. Some of the tools (discussed above), particularly knives and needles, may well have been personal possessions and the presence of examples in both well/pool 22210 (Group 448) and ditch 25027 (Group 838), as well as in some of the temple precinct deposits, is noteworthy.

Particularly difficult to interpret are the fragmentary metal items such as those described as 'strips', 'bars', 'spikes' or 'sheets' which are often present in deposits that display recognisable traits of deliberate deposition. Some or all of these may be part of the background scatter of metalwork characteristic of the later Roman features. Alternatively, they could be offerings in their own right — parts of artefacts damaged on purpose. It would seem that even pieces of waste metal could be used as offerings. The more obvious structured deposition in ditch 25027 (Group 838) contained a variety of iron, copper-alloy and lead fragments that included apparent offcuts and cast waste, alongside a range of recognisable objects — mainly jewellery and coins. It is thus possible that the incidence of similar metalwork elsewhere across the settlement, particularly in mid and late Roman pits could, at least in part, have been similarly deposited. However, within such pits, this metalwork content barely stands out against the high incidence of bulk rubbish; primarily pottery, tile and animal bone.

Miscellaneous (non-metallic) artefacts

Previous comments about the uncertainty surrounding the inclusion of artefacts due to residuality and 'incidental inclusion' are equally valid for the varied range of non-metallic material that often accompanies the main indicators of structured deposits (*i.e.* pottery and bone). The fragments of glass, loomweight and quernstone that are frequently present in structured and mundane deposits alike are particularly problematic as they could easily be dismissed as 'background noise' but, as Hill's study of ritual deposition in Wessex has shown, consideration of the structured nature of the seemingly mundane 'rubbish' element within pits may be equally pertinent (1995). Thus, we may ask if the apparent incidental inclusion of such material really was so incidental.

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Discussion

In contrast to such places as Danebury, where incidence of structured deposits is noted in one third of all pits (Cunliffe 1984), Heybridge has relatively few such deposits. Of course, there is temporal and spatial distance between these sites which means that differences in perceived patterning should be expected. Unlike in the settlements of Wessex, the deposition of human remains in pits was not practised. Whereas the pits at places such as Danebury are thought to have had a primary use as grain-stores, those at Heybridge were clearly not suitable, being cut into acidic and free-draining gravel in an area with a high water table. Instead, such pits seem to have had a primary use for rubbish disposal and it is likely that they were not considered suitable places for the interment of human remains because of this. A disposal, rather than storage function must surely have resulted in a markedly different attitude toward the pit. However, this did not make pits unsuitable for *all* types of ritual deposit/ practise.

Hill (1995) has concluded that ritual deposits do not contain different materials from mundane rubbish disposals, apart from the human remains or special animal bone groups that mark them as structured and therefore potentially 'ritual'. If this is the case, we must ask whether the presence of human or special animal bone was always a characteristic of ritual deposits, and if not, should we regard all deposits as 'structured' if they do not contain precisely 'average' quantities of everything that they could have contained? Clearly this is ludicrous, but how would we otherwise distinguish Hill's ritual class of deposit on a site with poor bone survival, if the bone is the only marker of special-ness?

Whether constituting an evolution of depositional practice or simply a regional difference, it is clear that the structured deposits identified at Heybridge exhibit a different set of traits to those of Wessex. Whereas Hill is of the opinion that it is the presence of human remains or of special animal bone groups that distinguish certain deposits as being the product of ritual, at Heybridge this is clearly not exclusively so. Although it may be true that structured deposits comprised one or perhaps two principal elements, these are diverse in range and could comprise pottery and/or metalwork in addition to, or instead of, bone. However, as has been highlighted by the difficulty experienced by the present authors in deciding which deposits convincingly display traits of ritual deposition, it could be argued that we only recognise, or accept, the most obvious of these. Thus, many more subtly structured deposits pass unnoticed.

Location

The choice of location of special deposits at Heybridge seems to have remained fairly constant over time, although their composition may have changed markedly. The significance of boundary locations is well appreciated (*e.g.* Hingley 1990; Hingley 1997) and at Heybridge they retained their symbolic importance throughout the life of the settlement. Based upon the identified sample, the following issues of location have been identified:

- Centre or periphery of settlement;

- Plot interior or boundary;

- Type of pre-existing feature used (including position along boundaries);

- Vertical positioning within features (*i.e.* top, middle or bottom).

Judging by their absence from the extensive area of hinterland excavated, identified structured deposits seem to be exclusively associated with, and thus found only within, the settlement. This suggests a particularly close relationship with the daily lives of the society that created them — these potentially magical and powerful deposits were clearly not kept at arms length, but were integral to the settlement and its well-being. Apart from a clear concentration focused upon the sacred place, structured deposits were found across the settlement (Figs 6.10 and 6.11) and are clearly features of areas of domestic occupation. Indeed, the foundation deposits within the walls and floors of buildings are inextricable from this.

The location of many of these deposits may well be significant, and the incidence of structured deposits in particular feature/deposit types is informative. Putting aside the likely different function and symbolism of different types of structured deposit, it is evident that those inserted into pre-existing pits are the most numerous (although a survival bias should perhaps be considered). However, incidence within purpose-made cuts, structural features and ditches is also significant. Deposition in wells is infrequent, but this may be a reflection of the relatively small number of wells excavated — particularly to their full depth. Layers may not be expected to yield many special deposits, partly because the act of burial seems important to their rites but also because they are more prone to disturbance and dispersal over time. Superficially, ditches may appear to be under-represented, particularly given the established significance of the boundary on other occupation sites. However, it should be noted that ditches were not a major feature of settlement morphology at Heybridge and, to an extent, limited sampling along these linear features will have affected rates of discovery. It is also noteworthy that, apart from the obvious concentration of structured deposits within a specific location (*i.e.* inside the temple precinct as opposed to outside), their relative incidence across the various feature and deposit types is similar. This is particularly the case if it is conceded that at least some of the temple precinct pits have more affinities with the category of 'purpose-made cut', in that their probable primary function was to receive votive material derived from temple rituals.

The distribution of structured deposits in discrete features is largely a reflection of their symbolic or magical function, as is perhaps demonstrated by their apparently random pattern in pits and purpose-made cuts. Too few ditch deposits have been identified to attempt to establish trends in the location along their lengths — *i.e.* at regular intervals, terminals or corners of enclosure boundaries — although some further speculation is offered below, in consideration of the ritual acts and symbolism they represent.

Chronology
(Table 6.7)

There appears to be a chronological trend evident within the composition of special deposits, as noted in Chapter 7 for changes in funerary practice. In both cases, this amounts to an increasing formalisation and 'rationalis- ation' of such deposits from the Late Iron Age to early/mid Roman periods and then a reversal to evermore elaborate,

diverse, and even bizarre assemblages thereafter. Indeed, the paralleling of burial practice by some votive deposits has already been suggested above, so it should perhaps be expected that the two display the same general traits, including chronological development. This is a clear indication that funerary rites and structured deposition were divergent aspects of the same religious belief system.

The most obvious trait to demonstrate chronological change is the preferred choice of principal artefact. At Heybridge, the most common are ceramic vessels and bone (either human or animal) in the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods, although this seems increasingly to give way to metalwork (principally coins, but also vessels and personal items) through the mid and late Roman periods. As mentioned above, there is some uncertainty as to the structuring or placing of some of these later deposits due to the generally high 'background' incidence of metalwork and coinage in almost all rubbish deposits in pits and ditches. However, if the special nature of these deposits is accepted, it becomes apparent that significant changes in this aspect of ritual practice took place from the later 2nd century, a pattern that has already been noted in other areas of settlement life.

It is also apparent that the Roman conquest did not have a dramatic impact on the practices of indigenous religious belief. Indeed, the picture that emerges from the recognised examples gives the impression of stability and continuity of religious practice and belief. While the format of Late Iron Age beliefs may have differed somewhat from those of Roman religion, both included a strong tradition of ritual deposition, particularly that concerning foundation deposits, even within Roman state religion (*e.g.* the rebuilding of the Capitol in AD 70, see Tacitus *Histories IV. Liii*). In this respect, at least some aspects of religious practice were broadly compatible with those of Rome and there is little case to be made for its systematic suppression or regulation following the conquest.

The dating of this corpus of structured deposits could be interpreted as revealing a trend of increasing incidence through time, with sixteen being dated to the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods and twenty-four to the mid to late Roman. However, it is suspected that this is the result of increased visibility of such deposits due to changes in their composition. As already noted, the fact that placements of relatively small assemblages of ceramic vessels and animal bones apparently gave way to larger and more varied assemblages that included metalwork suggests that some earlier examples have not been recognised when encountered. In view of the known levels of incidence of structured deposits elsewhere, particularly from the Middle Iron Age onwards, it is

extremely unlikely that ritual activity was any less frequent. Indeed, considering the proportional distribution of the deposits between the various feature types across the settlement (*i.e.* not including the temple precinct), it is evident that there is a high degree of uniformity between early and late periods (Table 6.7). Having established the continuity of feature types, it is possible to suggest that, although the content of the deposits changed over time, their function and the beliefs underpinning their creation did not.

The act and meaning of structured deposition
(Table 6.8)
Only the most general of statements can be made in relation to the form of activities that accompanied structured deposition. This is partly because the ritual acts and the symbolism that they, and the deposited artefacts, embodied are archaeologically invisible, but also due to the lack of detailed and systematic recording of their remains. However, even limited discussion of form and structuring may prove of value in the future recognition of this phenomenon at an early stage of excavation that, in turn, will facilitate the increased level of recording needed.

The lack of detailed recording of the exact positions of the component artefacts precludes the consideration of placement, both in terms of the care taken and in the particular arrangements of the component parts. It is likely that arrangement of deposits was important and symbolic, as was the case with the structuring of cremation assemblages (Chapter 7). There are hints that much care was indeed taken, particularly in the capping of special deposits with tile or clay, in both pre-existing and purpose-made cuts. This suggests perhaps an intended permanency or attempt to ensure the integrity of the 'offering'. Oyster deposits may have performed a similar function within the temple precinct.

The use of the term 'offering' has generally been avoided, in that it should be recognised that these deposits were not necessarily made in an act of thanksgiving, petition or propitiation. An alternative is that these collections, together with the rites, prayers and 'spells' conducted during their placement and burial, constituted *magical* entities. In this scenario, the deposits were invested with, or somehow acquired, powers of their own ('medicines'). The implication of this is that some, if not all, of the structured deposits were 'active' in the sense that they performed an ongoing function — most likely that of protection. It is with this interpretation of structured deposits as constituting acts of magic that the various categories of deposit should be considered (Table 6.8).

	LIA/ER	MR/LR
Pits	8 (35%)	11 (39%)
Cuts	4 (17%)	5 (18%)
Structural	3 (13%)	5 (18%)
Wells	2 (9%)	2 (9%)
Ditches	4 (17%)	5 (18%)
Layers	2 (9%)	0
Totals	**23**	**28**

Table 6.7 Count of structured deposits per feature type, by broad period

Feature type	No. in settlement	No. in temple precinct
Pits	20	23
Cuts	9	0*
Structural	8	5
Ditches	8	1
Wells	3	2
Layers	2	0

* some, if not all, of the temple precinct pits could be regarded as purpose-made cuts

Table 6.8 Context and location of structured deposits

Foundation deposits

At Heybridge, the majority of foundation deposits were clearly intended to provide propitious starts for new buildings, although it is conceded that those inserted into or under floors could have been later (supplementary?) placements. Such deposits were no doubt intended to ensure a range of things — the endurance of the structure itself, the health, happiness and fortune of its occupants and perhaps to prevent entry by malevolent spirits. The insertion of neonates, often in the post-setting of a doorway or beneath a floor, may represent the recognition and use of the pure spirit of the new-born as an emissary to the spirit world. Ceramic vessels built into foundations and walls of buildings most likely once held magical charms that, located under thresholds or windows, protected their inhabitants, while the inclusion of coins perhaps represented a more token offering to ensure a solid foundation for structures.

Closure deposits

It is generally accepted that structured deposits in the tops of infilled rubbish pits probably mark 'rites of termination' or 'closure'. The rite that resulted in these deposits may have included an element of 'thanking' the earth, a spirit/deity, or even the pit itself, for having done its job. The rubbish itself, as an extension of the lives of the people who generated it, may even have been accorded something amounting to its own formal 'burial' — hence the similarities with cremation burials. However, it seems plausible that the more important aspect was that of *protecting* this discarded material. In many 'primitive' societies, there is a belief in the power of magic and the ability of both people and spirit-beings to use personal items (*i.e.* almost anything a person has used or owned) for malevolent purposes. Thus, such closure deposits could be interpreted as magical entities guarding against the use of domestic rubbish in this way; warding off both evil spirits and perhaps even the perceived threat of sorcery from within the living community (*i.e.* one's enemies or ill-wishers). In the light of ethnographic analogy, this seems an entirely feasible possibility.

Closure deposits within ditches and wells are subtly different from those found in pits. Their differential positioning reflects the perceived point at which the various 'host' features ceased to function. With wells, this was as soon as their shafts were allowed to accumulate material, either deliberately or accidentally, and the water became contaminated; thus, votive deposits are generally found at their bottom. Ditches functioned adequately even when partially silted and so the position of deliberate deposits occurred at the point at which a decision was made to abandon and backfill them. These too may have had important protection significance, particularly those in major boundary ditches such as the two pairs of ceramic vessels in ditch 25274 (Group 89), where it may be further conjectured that they comprised only part of a more extensive series of structured deposits that were placed along the length of the ditch.

The study of wells is compromised by the lack of fully excavated examples, with structured deposits identified in only four of them. Being both spatially and temporally widespread (one per site period), meaningful comparison and the identification of common or changing patterns of deposition within them are limited.

The simplest and, in many ways, the least typical structured deposit was found in the earliest well, 17155 (Group 86). Although not fully excavated, a complete ceramic vessel was retrieved from what was probably low down in the well fill sequence. Early Roman well 9421 (Group 772) contained a single complete ceramic vessel at its bottom. This was accompanied by leather shoe fragments and some 4kg of animal bone, but little else. A fragment of wooden furniture (SF6615) was collected from higher in the fill sequence.

The mid Roman fill sequence of well 6280 (Group 531) is particularly informative as to the link between abandonment/disuse and structured deposition. The earliest infill deposit, 16083, contained six complete or near-complete vessels (KPG 26) together with a quantity of butchered bone, two wooden objects (knob SF5667 and peg SF7185), leather shoes and a fragment of a millstone quern. It is uncertain whether 3kg of tile, also present, represented a capping deposit. However, the tiles were covered by apparently collapsed boards and overlain by a thick deposit of clay, both of which were derived from the well construction/lining. It is entirely conceivable that this 'collapse' was itself a deliberate act of closure that followed the placing of the structured deposit. Following this, the rest of the well shaft was backfilled with a series of rubbish-rich silts. Incidentally, uppermost fill 6281 contained a fragment of a copper-alloy letter (SF2347) that was almost certainly derived from votive activities of the nearby temple precinct.

While it could be argued that the waterlogged conditions within these wells preserved a number of organic artefacts that have not survived elsewhere, it is possible that the presence of items of wood and leather, in close association with complete ceramic vessels, was not merely incidental. The significance and symbolism of the shoe in Roman belief is well demonstrated in the incidence of shoe-brooches (Simpson and Blance 1998, 277) and their inclusion in burial assemblages (*e.g.* Barber and Bowsher 2000, 137–8); both of which were invested with symbolism.

'Use deposits'

Foundation and closure, equating with birth and death, are the two opposing ends — if a process of birth, life and death can have 'ends' — of a cycle for which the intervening passage of time is less easily discerned in these ritual deposits. Having said this, there are some deposits that seem to constitute prolonged use of ritual features and thus may be interpreted as symbolically filling this apparent void. The pool 22210 (Group 448) is a particular case in that it represents 'wishing well'-like use, with deposits presumably made either on entering or exiting the temple precinct, perhaps representing the assistance of spirits or a deity in matters of daily life. It is possible that such activities extended to other open features such as the large boundary ditch 25027 (Group 838). Here, it seems that 'life' or 'use' deposits were made rather than the kind of closure deposits normally associated with ditches.

The term 'use deposit' has been applied to placed assemblages that neither denote rites of foundation or closure and, in occupying purpose-made cuts, have no clear association with occupation activities. The most obvious of these generally comprised groups of ceramic vessels that appear to represent domestic assemblages that

have been used — showing signs of wear, external burning and modification (*e.g.* 20008/Group 708 — KCG 17).

The precise nature of smaller deposits such as the pair of samian vessels in 4148 (Group 732) and the copper-alloy flagon in 15368 (Group 696) is less clear, although a similar function of their deposition is postulated. While the two samian bowls may have been a more unusual deposit, the grog-tempered coarseware lid and the potin coin accompanying them may represent the inclusion of an 'old' or 'used' element. The copper-alloy flagon also appears to have been old when buried which suggests that this may be another 'offering' of a used item. Indeed, it may be the case that the term 'offering' is most pertinent to this category of deposit, being generally more gratuitous collections of artefacts, the placement of which seems to bear little relation to specific activities (such as pit digging/filling, construction and habitation). These seem to have more in common with the type of votive deposition associated with the temple where, in addition to animal sacrifice/feasting, deposition appears to include an element of *personal sacrifice* that is expressed in the 'giving-up' of intimate or prized items that were perhaps symbolic of, or meaningful to, the devotee.

Thus, the group of pewter bowls in shaft-like cut 6641 (Group 579) appears to be an offering probably made in relation to the sacred place — the headless horse constituting a protective deposit over it. Although already discussed in relation to the temple and religious practice within its precinct, votive pool 22210 (Group 448) is probably a further expression of this 'use deposit' category, albeit one that is more specifically linked to temple ritual and a result of collective and extended deposition. Although the artefact assemblage within ditch 25027 (Group 838) could be regarded as a closure deposit along an important late Roman boundary, its wide range, quantity and dispersal along the length of this feature suggests another example of prolonged and collective placing (or rather casting) of mundane items used as offerings.

What's missing?
The true frequency of structured deposits across the settlement, and the rites to which they pertain, is unknown. Those recognised during the course of excavation and, retrospectively, in post-excavation analysis are those that were conspicuously marked, had survived the passage of time and were fortuitously present within the areas and features sampled. It remains possible that the construction of every house or the infilling of every ditch or rubbish pit was marked by a ritual of some kind; either some of these have simply not survived, or else they did not include the deposition of durable artefacts (if any at all) as part of the act.

It is important to remember that what we recognise as structured deposits are in fact the surviving remains of what were most likely larger votive assemblages that included a range of organic components. Judging by the higher incidence of ceramic vessels in the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods, it may be posited that the inclusion of foodstuffs and liquids was particularly pertinent then. In the case of closure deposits within ditches and pits, the preference for ceramic containers in the form of jars, rather than open vessels such as platters or cups, hints at the intention to protect their presumed contents from the soil. This is perhaps less indicative of the vessel contents being offerings, since decay and incorporation into the soil may well have been perceived as part of the transfer to, or consumption by, spirits and deities. Instead, it is more satisfactory to regard the vessel contents as potions or magical spells that were protected *in situ* so that they could continue to perform their presumed protective function.

Although the role of vessels within 'use deposits' appears to differ from that of closure deposits, in that the function as containers for magical spells is less apparent, it remains likely that these assemblages were accompanied by organic items. In any form of structured deposit, organic components may have included libations, foodstuffs such as meat, bread and fruits, but also perhaps other auspicious plants — as evidenced by archaeobotanical remains retrieved from Roman burials (*e.g.* Kreuz 2000).

Of course, only the votive acts that involved burial of durable material assemblages have tended to survive. The acceptance of the former existence of a range of other above-ground structured deposits and ritual acts further diminishes our recognition of the true frequency of votive acts across Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlements. While the incidence of above-ground deposits is generally restricted to religious sites (*e.g.* the Late Iron Age 'ossuary' at Ribemont-sur-Ancre), it is not unreasonable to speculate that other, perhaps less spectacular, deposits occurred in the domestic setting. These may have included offerings suspended from trees, posts or even from houses.

While the existence and nature of above-ground structured deposits at Heybridge can only be a matter for speculation, it is evident that their below-ground placement was both commonplace and widespread across all areas of the settlement, both sacred and profane. It seems clear that throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, a mix of religious, magical and superstitious beliefs were melded, no doubt imperceptibly, with the 'mechanics' of daily life. In view of the apparent continuity of depositional practice, particularly in 1st and 2nd centuries AD, it is likely that such placed deposits were expressions of essentially native/indigenous belief and custom which, like so many other aspects of lifestyle, became Romanised.

IV. Conclusion

Consideration of the form, location and likely meaning of recognised structured deposits at Elms Farm has given a further insight into religious belief and practice that extends beyond the interpretation of evidence solely derived from sacred places such as shrines and temples. In addition to formal religious practice that might be viewed as essentially communal or collective, the diverse and widespread examples of 'ritual deposits' from the domestic settlement reveal a more personal level of religious involvement. Study of the differing compositions and locations of these deposits has begun to show that they probably embody a number of differing functions and that the key to understanding what these were is to appreciate that they constituted active and powerful entities endowed with magical properties to the society that created them. While no doubt also endowed with symbolism and connotation, their active potency as 'medicine' was, and is, of primary importance.

Although viewed as an aspect of popular belief that at times borders on the superstitious, the close connection between depositional practices undertaken within the temple precinct and those of the wider settlement is clear. However, it remains a matter of speculation as to whether the religious activity recognised at Heybridge constitutes an essentially indigenous system of belief, as does the question of the importance and influence of Roman belief.

Lastly, this study has shown that religious practice and belief, like many other aspects of Late Iron Age and Romano-British life, was not static but constantly changing, at least in the way it manifests itself in the archaeological record — from which it is surely possible to postulate real change in Romano-British religion itself.

Chapter 7. Funerary Practices

I. Introduction
(Fig. 7.1 and Table 7.1)

Burials and associated funerary features excavated at Elms Farm span the Late Iron Age to late Roman (Periods 2 to 5, Table 7.1). Although there is a bias toward the Late Iron Age in terms of quantity, there are sufficient of all periods to provide an insight into the changing nature and location of funerary activity. Wickenden set the scene as regards the location of burials in relation to the Roman settlement at Heybridge (1986, 63–4). The evidence from Elms Farm adds to this picture of burial largely being restricted to the settlement peripheries and immediate hinterland (Fig. 7.1), though it also highlights that there were exceptions to this — particularly in the later Roman periods. Although neonate remains have been identified (*e.g.* 13167 in Building 23, Area I) these were recovered from occupation features within the settlement and are not considered infant burials *per se*. Instead, they are viewed as structured deposits and, as such, are discussed in Chapter 6.

II. Late Iron Age
(Fig. 7.2 and Table 7.2)

The majority of Late Iron Age funerary features were found within the hinterland of Area W. Although Wickenden commented on the emerging evidence for the location of cremation burials around the fringes and within the 'backlands' of Roman small towns (Wickenden 1986, 63), it is perhaps apparent that, at Heybridge, this practice originated around the end of the 1st century BC. Although a relatively rare occurrence across Essex, and never very numerous, cremations at Mucking might add weight to this view. The nearest cremation burial of similar date is that at Maldon Hall Farm (Lavender 1991), although its relation to any settlement is unknown.

This funerary activity, comprising a total of thirty-four cremation-related features, mostly probable pyre sites and only one actual cremation burial, occupied a peripheral location alongside major boundary ditch 25102 (Group 10), in the hinterland immediately to the north of the settlement (Figs 3.2 and 7.2, Table 7.2). These were clearly located amid agricultural land, within fields that most probably contained cereal crops in this period. All but four were located to the north of major boundary ditches 25188 (Group 321) and 25194 (Group 314) that marked the southern edge of farmland (Fig. 7.2). It is possible that the siting of such features outside settlements
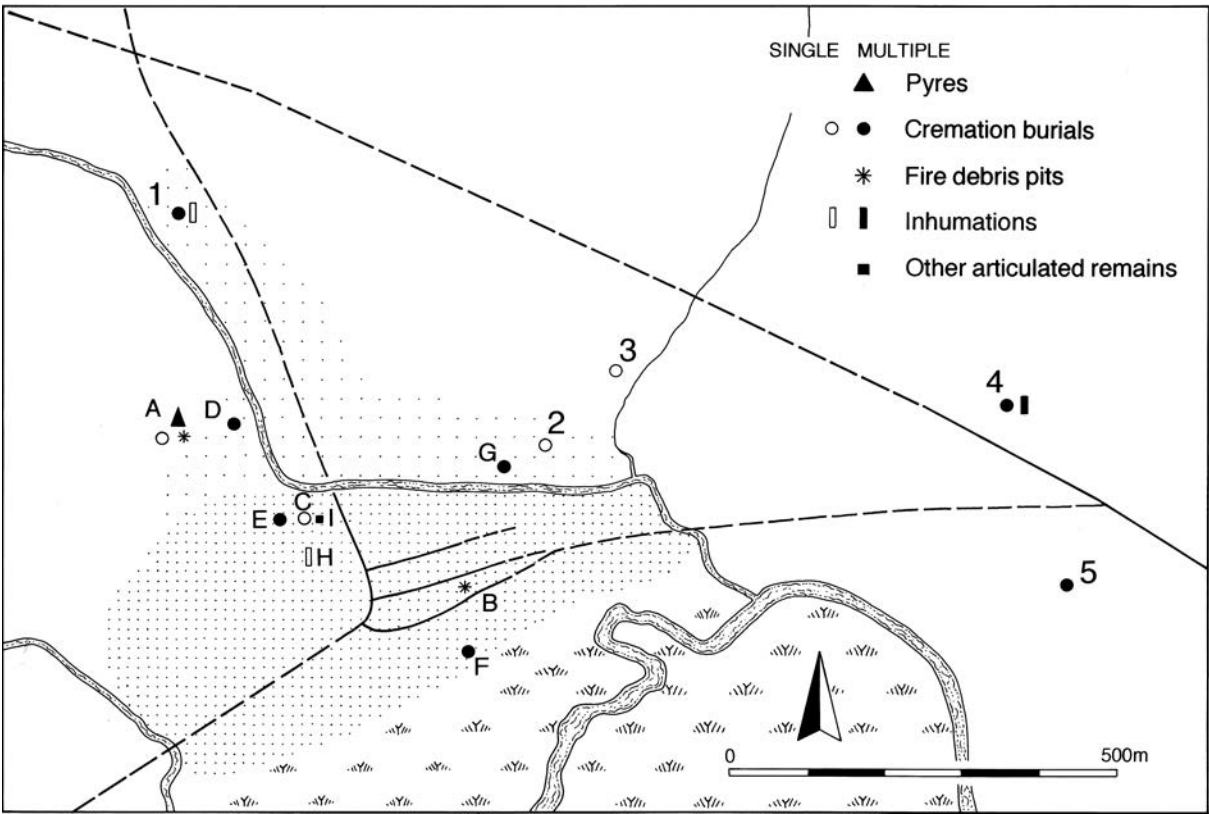
Figure 7.1 Distribution of burial sites in the vicinity of Elms Farm, Heybridge (main settlement area shaded)

had as much to do with returning the dead to fertile ground as any perceived necessity to distance cemeteries from occupation areas on health grounds, as is cited to be the case in the Roman period. Both description and discussion of the pyre sites and associated features are framed by the very thorough study of similar features at the Late Iron Age cemetery and 'religious site' on the Westhampnett Bypass (Fitzpatrick 1997a) and in particular Jacqueline McKinley's analysis of cremation (1997a and 1997b).

Pyre sites

The focus of this funerary activity was a linear spread of 19, similarly aligned, elongated oval or rectangular cuts (Vol. 2, Section 2.3.3 and Fig. 7.2 and Pl. 3.3). A further two outliers were recorded to their east. Most of these featured a shallow, integral, notch-like projection in one side, generally the west. A further fourteen round to oval cuts were recognised as associated, although they largely occupied peripheral or outlying locations in relation to the linear spread. These are discussed separately, below, as pyre-*related* features.

Regardless of shape, all the features contained the same characteristic charcoal-rich fills. All included burnt pebbles and gravel. In some instances the fills, and even the cuts themselves, showed signs of *in situ* burning, particularly those with the integral notches. These burnt fills generally yielded very small quantities of cremated human bone, varying in weight from a nominal 1g to 593g, accompanied by usually sparse pottery and metalwork, the vast majority of which had also been burnt.

In the absence of identifiable characteristics common to cremation burials, such as significant concentrations of human bone (whether urned or not), and the structured arrangement of grave goods, the majority of these features have been interpreted as containing cremation-related deposits rather than the cremation burials themselves. The nineteen rectangular cuts are more precisely identified as likely pyre sites (on these distinctions, see McKinley 1997a). Thus, these features are interpreted as having functioned as flues below the pyre structure, creating an up-draught (or at least permitting the circulation) of air through the centre of the pyre to aid its effective combustion. Distinctive primary silting deposits were identified in the bases of a number of pyre site flues (*e.g.* 2195, 2196, 2218, 2237, 2490, 2672, 2705, 2908; Vol. 2,

Detailed Text 2B_36). These have been interpreted as deriving from the weathering of the cut and may indicate that either the construction of the pyres took a protracted period of time or else, once built, they were left standing before being lit. If the latter is deemed more likely, then it is possible to speculate that corpses may have been placed upon them; though whether the pyres stood for days or weeks cannot be ascertained from these minor weathering deposits.

Although classical authors such as Lucan allude to excarnation practices in contemporary Gaul (Brunaux 1988, 87), this is not to say that excarnation is suggested here, as this would seem to be at odds with the practical and symbolic aspects embodied in the practice of cremation. Some doubt concerning the 2nd century AD poet's accuracy in this matter must also be expressed. Rather, it may have been the case that the corpse was displayed, even 'laid in state', on the pyre for a short time. At certain times of the year, a few days exposure of the pyre to the vagaries of the British weather would probably have been enough to produce the primary silt deposits noted.

The 'flues' may originally have been more extensive and have since been partially ploughed out, along with more extensive areas of pyre debris over and around them as it is likely that the pyres themselves would have been constructed directly on the ground surface. However, the surviving deposits within the pyre flues do not appear to have been reworked or redeposited in any way — the charcoal-rich fills constituting *in situ* debris that had fallen and settled within the flue cut, thus escaping subsequent truncation.

The undisturbed nature of these deposits is apparent in the patterning of the burnt organics, pottery and metalwork that is common throughout these pyre sites. The majority of the burnt fills comprised fine charcoal and ash that fell through the pyre structure as it was reduced by the flames. However, larger fragments of charred timbers were often noted to 'line' the long sides of the flues. These seem to have been substantial pieces of pyre fuel that collapsed into the accumulated ashes, which then impeded their complete reduction.

A degree of patterning was also evident in the artefact assemblages, all of which were burnt, as far as it is possible to ascertain. Where present, the pottery, whether

Period	Area	Feature type(s)	Contexts (Groups)	Date
2	E	Cremation burial	8177 (G84)	Early–mid 1st century AD
2	M	Pyre-debris deposit	15416 (in pit 15417) (G33)	Late 1st century BC
2	W	Cremation burial & pyre sites	*Grave:* 2379	Late 1st century BC to early 1st century AD +
			Pyres: 526, 2164, 2181, 2189, 2196, 2201, 2237/2908, 2254, 2332, 2422/2465, 2443, 2455, 2490, 2609, 2672, 2673, 2705, 2906/2910, 2934	
			Pyre-related: 510, 513, 537, 561, 581, 2119, 2129, 2135, 2195, 2202, 2212, 2218, and 2533/2606/3585 (Group 317)	
3	W	Cremation burials	43, 554, 557, 559, 564, 572	**ER [Early Roman?]**
3	M	Cremation burial	15017/15040 (Group 702)	ER
3B	D	Cremation burial	9329/9665/9927/9928 (Group 781)	Mid–late 1st century AD
3B	R	Cremation burial group	12003, 12006, 12038, 12105, 12120, 12203, 12208, 12219 (Group 964)	Mid–late 2nd century
4	E	Inhumation	10776 (Group 809)	Mid 3rd century
5	E	Limb and skull burials	8142, 8155 (Group 836)	4th century +

Table 7.1 Summary of funerary features

grog-tempered jars, *terra nigra* platters, Central Gaulish flagons or amphorae, was heavily burnt and present only as partial vessels (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2) It is notable that the incidence of unburnt pottery was restricted to only two *pyre-related* features 2181 and 2195; the flagon in the latter was clearly a deliberate insertion into the still-visible remnants of pyre site 2201. Fourteen of the pyre sites contained pottery, of which only seven comprised the remains of two or more vessels (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2).

This suggests that the presence of pottery in these under-pyre flues is highly incidental, being reliant on the fortuitous trajectory of smaller, heat shattered, fragments down through the pyre structure. Thus, while the relatively high variability of vessel type and their low incidence amongst these features may well hint at the diverse range of ceramic pyre offerings, this cannot be relied upon to give a trustworthy insight into quantity.
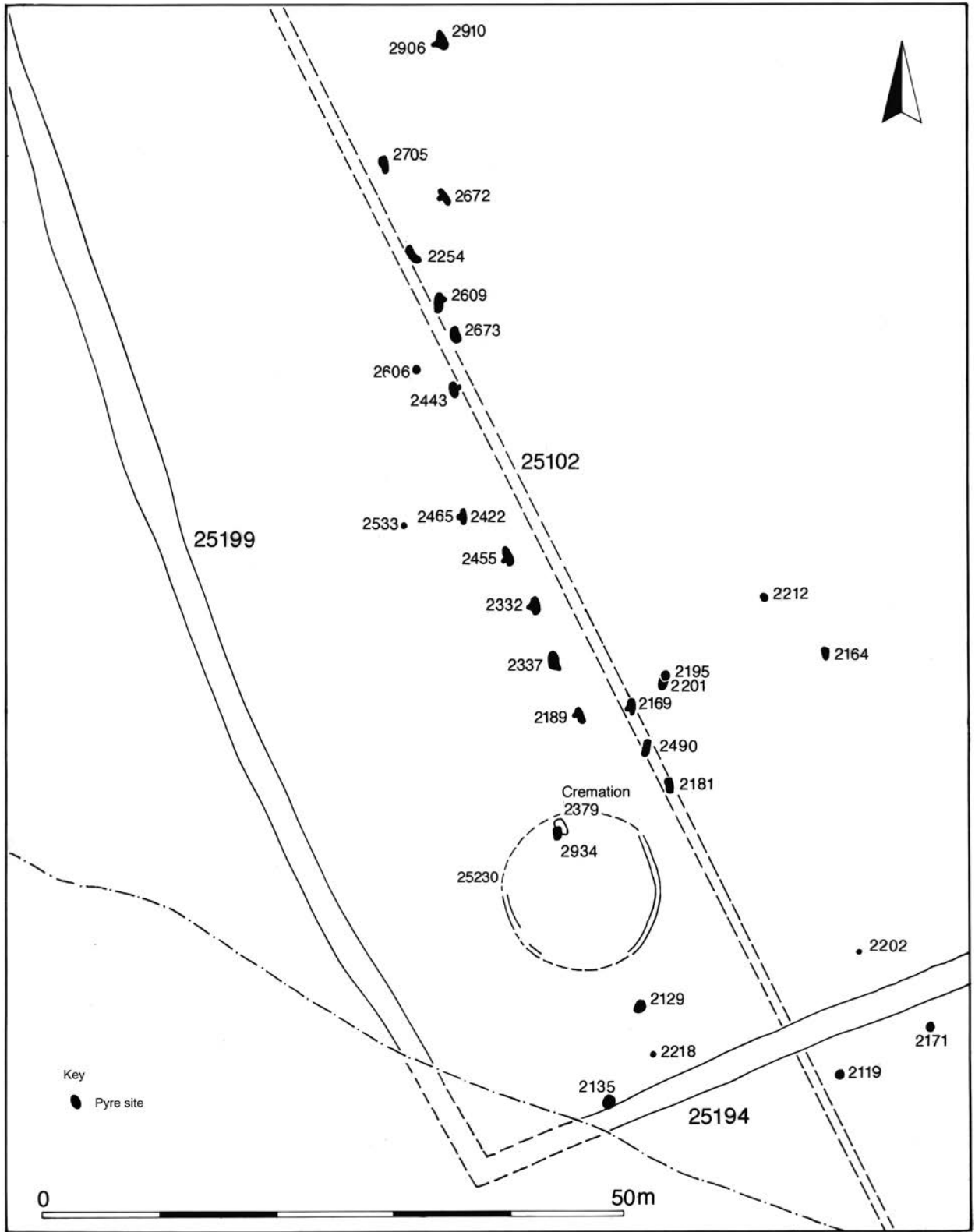
Figure 7.2 The Late Iron Age pyre field, Area W

The absence of most, if not all, cremated bone suggests that the flues themselves quickly filled with charcoal and ash that was probably largely derived from the more rapid burning of brushwood. The body, supported on the more substantial timbers of the pyre, would have taken longer to burn and thus the bone fragments would have been deposited on or near the top of the accumulated debris. Indeed, experimental pyre firings, described by McKinley (1997b, 67–8), have shown that the essence of pyre structure is maintained throughout the cremation process and that the human remains largely maintain their position on the top of the pyre debris. At Westhampnett, relatively small quantities of cremated human bone were present within the pyre site flues, particularly those deemed to have been subsequently undisturbed. At Elms Farm, cremated human bone was observed to be present, sometimes in reasonably significant quantity, in sixteen of the pyre flues, and collectable in all but one (Vol. 2, Section 4.5). Retrievable quantity of cremated bone from pyre sites ranged from less than 1g (pyre site 2332) to 593g (pyre site 2201), with a mean of 145g. As discussed in the human remains report, the cremated bone, preserved *in situ* in the flues, attests to an effective pyre technology but cannot shed light on the efficiency of its collection for burial — other than to indicate that this was evidently restricted to the surface material.

If it is accepted that most, if not all, the pyre sites were undisturbed, the artefacts and human remains that were preserved in their flues must have fallen through the pyre relatively early on in the cremation process. The agency for this accelerated downward passage of artefacts is perhaps best explained by the ceramic pyre goods being

Type	Feature No (Group)	Cremated bone	Metalwork	Pottery	Other	Structure
Grave						
	2379 (G315)	430g	-	3 vessels + lid	-	
Pyre sites						
	526 (G316)	-	-	Pot	Quern, slag	Looks *in situ*
	2164 (G316)	-	-	2 sherds	-	?aligned burnt timber
	2181 (G316)	-	-	2 grog vessels	-	
	2189 (G316)	flecks *	-	Grog + flagon	Flints	Aligned burnt timbers
	2196 (G316)	1g	-	*Terra Nigra* sherds	Flint	
	2201 (G316)	593g	4/5 brooches fe nail	Grog jar + amphora	-	
	2237/2908 (G316)	<2g	1 brooch	Amphora	-	
	2254 (G316)	88g	-	Grog bowl	-	
	2332 (G316)	<1g	2 brooches	Grog	-	Multiple charcoal fills
	2422/2465 (G316)	2g	-	-	Glass	Multiple charcoal fills
	2443 (G316)	83g	Fe cylinder	Grog, **esh[?]**, + *Terra nigra*	Baked clay, slag	Multiple charcoal fills
	2455 (G316)	421g	-	1 grog vessel	Flint, glass	
	2490 (G316)	445g	1 brooch	Grog, amphora	-	Multiple charcoal fills
	2672 (G316)	32g	4 nails	-	Daub	Multiple charcoal fills
	2609 (G316)	103g	-	-	Slag	
	2673 (G316)	112g	-	-	Flint	Multiple charcoal fills + aligned timbers
	2705 (G316)	26g	3 nails	-	Flint	Multiple charcoal fills
	2906/2910 (G316)	2g	-	Grog, beaker	-	
	2934 (G316)	262g	Cu frags	Pot	Flint	
Pyre-related						
	510 (G317)	160g	4 nails	Grog	-	
	513 (G317)	-	-	-	Flint	
	537 (G317)	12g	-	Grog	-	
	581 (G317)	8g	-	Tazza	-	
	561	- 4g?	-	Pot	Daub, flints	
	2119 (G317)	-	-	Pot	Slag, briquetage, flint	
	2129 (G317)	18g	-	Jar	-	(*in situ* burning?)
	2135 (G317)	46g animal	1 nail	Pot	Slag, briquetage, flint	
	2195 (G317)	307g	1 nail	Flagon, amphora	Baked clay, flint	
	2202 (G317)	-	-	-	-	
	2212 (G317)	<1g	-	-	-	
	2218 (G317)	-	-	Grog jar	-	
	2533 (G317)	-	-	-	-	
	2606 (G316)	2g	-	-	Slag	
	3585 (G317)	2g	1 brooch 1 fe nail	pot	Glass	
Pyre debris						
	15416 (G33)	-	Cu frag	lots	flint	

* = observed during excavation, but not collected

Table 7.2 Late Iron Age funerary features and finds

heat-shattered, or broken if thrown on, and the brooches released as the fire consumed clothing on the corpse. Alternatively, Nina Crummy has suggested that a number of the brooches may have been *deliberately* broken (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.4), in which case they would most likely have been thrown on to the burning pyre too. This would not only have aided their downward passage, but prevented them from being melted beyond recognition, as is clearly the case.

This is a less satisfactory explanation of the early passage of cremated bone into the flues, given that these are noted to be 'well burnt' or 'very well burnt' (Duhig; Vol. 2, Section 4.5) suggesting both intense and prolonged burning. This could, then, be construed as an indicator of disturbance or reworking of the pyre site material, as has been suggested for some such deposits at Westhampnett (McKinley 1997b, 66). However, study of aspects of structuring within the flue deposits suggests that at least half are very likely to have been undisturbed, as judged by the preservation of multiple charcoal fills and the distinctive 'lining' of cuts by the charred timbers. Such indicators do not necessarily coincide consistently with particularly low bone weights. Furthermore, the number of undisturbed deposits may be increased by considering the incidence of brooches. If it is accepted that such personal dress items were often collected for deposition within the grave, then their presence is likely to indicate a lack of disturbance (*e.g.* pyre site 2201 with its 4 or 5 brooches). Further implications of the incidence of grave goods, particularly through comparison between pyre sites and pyre-related features, are pursued below.

That so much material, particularly the smaller items of metalwork, found its way into the flue, rather than the surrounding land surface below the pyre, is a likely indication that these pyres were carefully and intentionally constructed to collapse inwards. Indeed, the iron nails amongst the debris might have been fixings from the major timbers, rather than from offerings such as boxes; although reuse of structural timbers on the pyre remains an equally likely source of these artefacts, as has been concluded at Westhampnett (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 106). The larger sherds of burnt pottery did not generally pass down through the pyre so quickly and so only small portions of vessels are present in the flue deposits. Even so, there is a semblance of patterning in the distribution of ceramics within the pyre flues. It may be noted that the pottery tended to accumulate in distinct concentrations at the ends or middle of the features. This may reflect placement on the pyre above and again suggests the inward nature of collapse, although it has been suggested that such remains may equally indicate some sort of lower, fixing, structure between pyre and flue (Gale 1997, 78).

While it is unlikely than any deliberate or selective process of retrieval was carried out on the pyre flue deposits, the artefact assemblages probably represent only a small fraction of a varied range of goods that were deposited on the pyre. It should also be considered that, other than bone, only the non-organic items (pottery, metalwork, glass) survived and that, at best, a range of other offerings in perishable materials can only be inferred. It must be assumed that the majority of the burnt and broken remains of non-organic offerings came to rest in a pile, above ground, that overlay the flue. Although some of this material was apparently redeposited in the pyre-related features that lay near the pyre sites, little or no

surface debris seems to have been left *in situ*. If this had been the case, other pits and ditches in the vicinity, either contemporary or later, could be expected to contain pyre material, whether incidentally redeposited or residual. It thus appears that the vast bulk of material was purposefully removed and disposed of elsewhere.

Close parallels to these pyre sites within the region are unknown to the authors at the time of writing. However, as acknowledged previously, very similar features have been excavated in the Late Iron Age cemetery, and so-termed 'religious site', on the Westhampnett Bypass excavations in West Sussex (Fitzpatrick 1997b), albeit dated a generation or two earlier. In particular, pyre site 20578 closely mirrors the shape of the notched rectangular features at Heybridge (Fitzpatrick 1997b, 18–21); others display similar alignment of charred timbers (*e.g.* 20283) and concentrations of pottery (*e.g.* 20717). While the Westhampnett pyre sites display considerably more variation in form, often outlining X, Y or T-shapes, their contents were remarkably consistent with those at Elms Farm.

The cosmological referents seen by Fitzpatrick (1997b, 234–40) in the Westhampnett cemetery find no equivalent at Elms Farm. There is nothing in the layout or orientation of the pyre sites, or the ditches on which they align, to suggest any correspondence with equinoctial or solar observations. At Elms Farm, unlike Westhampnett, the pyre sites seem to be central to the funerary activity. This may, of course, be a false impression created by the absence of a cremation cemetery in close association. Apart from the suggested relationship between lone grave 2379 and the pyre sites (below), the separation of the processes and places of cremation and burial seems to have been marked and significant.

The linear, roughly north–south arrangement and varying relationship of the pyre sites to both earlier ditch 25102 (Group 10) and contemporary boundary 25199 (Group 314) may well have its own significance. This activity was certainly planned and controlled, as is evidenced by the regular spacing and alignment of the pyre sites. It is postulated that, because the greatest regularity occurred in the southern half of the main spread of these features, the group may display a northward chronological distribution/development (Fig. 7.2). It is further suggested that the point of origin for this development was the typologically earlier cremation burial 2379 (below). This does not preclude some, or all, of the pyre sites being contemporary, although it does suggest that they were at least laid out from south to north. It is particularly interesting to note that the probable oldest identified individual from the pyre site human remains was from 2934 — the very pyre site that *overlay* grave 2379.

Pyre-related features

A number of less morphologically distinct features, that contained material of a broadly similar nature, were located in the proximity of the pyre sites. Although they contained pyre-derived debris, the lack of structure clearly indicated that this material was redeposited or, at the very least, disturbed or reworked (feature 2129 was noted as showing *in situ* burning). It thus remains possible that some or all of these features were less well defined, truncated or disturbed pyre sites themselves. However, the majority were significantly different from the nineteen

recognised pyre sites, being smaller and distinctly rounded, rather than rectangular. It is therefore more likely that they represent a different, but closely associated, type of cremation-related feature. This morphology-based distinction is supported by the comparison of the various types of grave-good assemblages, revealing some interesting traits that suggest differing function. Copper-alloy brooches, reasonably common at the pyre sites, are absent in the related features, other than in 3585. However, both contained iron nails. This suggests that copper-alloy artefacts were extracted from the *surface* pyre site deposit prior to deposition of a portion of this debris in the pyre-related features. This is perhaps echoed by the presence of large sherds of burnt 'exotic' ceramic vessels (*i.e.* amphorae, platters, beakers) at the pyre sites compared with the small sherds of burnt mundane wares/forms in the related features (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.8). In this case, feature 2195 is the clear exception.

The nature of their association with the pyre sites is far from clear, but it is perhaps possible to interpret them as pyre debris 'dumps' that probably had symbolism and ritual of their own. The small volume of these features indicates that such debris disposal could only involve a small proportion of the total pyre debris and could not have resulted in the complete removal of the above-ground deposit at the pyre site. This was therefore a token or 'votive' act, perhaps akin to the burial rite. However, due to the highly fragmented, burnt and partial remains of pyre goods recovered, no direct relationship between specific pyre sites and related features could be established.

Only one such feature related directly to a specific pyre site; this in itself may suggest that feature 2195 was of a different nature to the rest. As previously mentioned, rounded feature 2195 was cut into the north end of pyre site 2201 and, unusually, contained what was a complete *unburnt* flagon. This was accompanied by charcoal, burnt pottery and calcined bone. It is noteworthy that both feature 2195 and pyre site 2201 contained the largest quantities of cremated human bone for their respective feature types (307g and 593g, respectively), all probably derived from a single individual. This strongly suggests that the charcoal, burnt pottery sherds and bone were wholly residual from the pyre site. This is the single example of a deliberate insertion of a feature and 'new' material into a pyre site, but serves to indicate that the latter may have been marked and respected for some time after their use. This observation is borne out by the lack of truncation and the regular spacing of the pyre sites (Fig. 7.2). It is therefore possible that the pyre sites themselves were not simply functional but continued to have a funerary significance beyond the act of cremation.

While some pyre-related features were located in close proximity to pyre sites (*e.g.* 513, 2212, 2533, 2606), others were peripheral or at a distance to them. The latter may be perceived to occur in small clusters (*e.g.* 2129, 2135, 2218 and 537, 581), or else may form a sporadic spread along either side of the major boundary marked by ditches 25188 and 25194 (Fig. 7.2). Their location in relation to what probably constituted the division between settlement and farmland may not have been without significance and symbolism. Pyre-related feature 3585 is an isolated example, some 47m south of this boundary. Although still rather peripheral, this feature serves to show that at least some of the pyre debris was brought into the settlement, an

issue that is revisited in consideration of deposit 15416, below.

Cremation burials

Only a single cremation burial lay within the spread of the pyre sites and their associated features. Rectangular grave cut 2379 contained an assemblage of three ceramic jars and a lid, with the largest of the jars, 2483, containing 392g of cremated human bone. A further 44g of bone, including parts of the same individual, lay outside the vessel together with an amount of charcoal. It is likely that this constitutes some kind of ritual deposit or offering derived from the pyre debris. Located at the southern end of the linear spread of pyre sites, it appears that this cremation may have provided a 'point of origin' for the funerary activity, with the vast majority of the pyre sites extending away from it. Those pyres closest to it have been noted to display greatest regularity in their spacing, suggesting that they were indeed located with reference to it. Pyre site 2934 was actually cut into its top, thus perhaps emphasising the primacy of this grave. Typologically, the ceramic grave goods date the burial to the late 1st century BC and clearly predate those used as pyre goods, which would add weight to its identification as a focal feature.

The one Late Iron Age cremation burial 8177, in Area E, was probably also in a relatively peripheral location in relation to the Late Iron Age settlement, despite its distance from the rest of the cemetery features. However, being something of a chance discovery below a masking deposit of reworked brickearth, it is quite possible that it was only one of a number of single, scattered, cremation burials on the northern settlement outskirts.

Despite constituting a very small sample, there are two conspicuous aspects to these Late Iron Age cremations that are worthy of consideration. The first is the very lack of further cremation burials, particularly in view of the conversely high number of pyre sites that must surely attest to the cremation of a minimum of nineteen individuals. The second is the absence of ceramic pyre goods included as grave goods and of pyre debris in the graves. The two are likely to be connected and suggest both a physical and a spiritual separation between the ritual acts of cremation and burial.

Burial 8177 did include a La Tène III iron brooch-and-ring ensemble (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.4) that had been deposited with the urned remains of the deceased. While it is difficult to tell if this item had been recovered from the pyre, the fact of its good state of preservation, and perhaps its fusion with some of the cremated bone, indicates that this was probably the case. As is appreciated by Fitzpatrick (1997a, 38), it was pyre goods such as this that were most commonly placed in Late Iron Age burials.

The two Late Iron Age cremations were more effectively cremated than those of early Roman date, perhaps indicating more efficient pyre technology or else greater care in ensuring full combustion of the corpse itself.

Thus, other than a representative selection of cremated bone and the occasional piece of metalwork, it appears that local funerary practice did not involve the inclusion of significant quantities of pyre 'material' (*i.e.* goods or debris). As the bulk of this material was absent from the pyre sites and their associated features, it seems clear that it was removed to a *third* location, separate from both the place of cremation and of burial.

Pyre debris deposit 15416

As previously noted, the relative scarcity of burnt artefacts in pyre features and their virtual absence in contemporary cremation burials suggests that pyre debris was deliberately separated from the bone, and perhaps selected items of metalwork, and disposed of elsewhere. At Elms Farm, one such deposit has been identified. Pit 15417 (Group 33), located some 500m to the south-east of the pyre sites, contained a further example of what is evidently a pyre-related deposit. While the pit itself is likely to have had little to do with burial practice, the deposit of highly burnt pottery within it is very similar to those of the pyre sites of Area W, the principal difference being the sheer quantity. The ceramic assemblage has been fully quantified as Key Pottery Group 5 (Vol. 2, Section 3.2.1.3) and its nature resulting from use as a pyre deposit addressed in discussion of the use of pottery in funerary activities (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.8). Here, wider implications of this material to the interpretation and understanding of the relationship between pyre, grave and debris 'dump' are explored.

Most significantly, deposit 15416 presumably represents the bulk of the above-ground debris that was generated at the pyre site, although no direct association with any of those in Area W can be established. While the flues clearly accumulated some of the debris, the majority of the non-ash material (including cremated bone fragments, pottery and metalwork) would have been in the surface deposit. Deposit 15416 also serves to show that the artefacts from the pyre flues account for only a small proportion of the whole pyre assemblage and that further scrutiny of its composition may give a more accurate picture of the range of material used as pyre goods.

The pyre sites and related features indicate the range of ceramic and metallic goods placed on the pyres, but cannot necessarily be regarded as a reliable reflection of their quantity. Debris deposit 15416 shows that the number of ceramic pyre goods was, at least in some cases, far greater than is otherwise evident. Its varied assemblage of at least twenty-five vessels, including a minimum of three amphorae, makes it difficult to believe that all were placed upon the pyre prior to the act of cremation, particularly if the presence of a further range of organic 'offerings' is accepted. It is perhaps more likely that at least some of the vessels were added to the pyre *during* cremation. If so, the intense heat of the fire would have meant the extra vessels had to be thrown on, which may help explain post-breakage burning and even the unburnt parts of vessels, the latter a result of sherds flying out of the pyre on impact.

Deposit 15416 clearly derived from a pyre and represents the disposal of at least a part of the 'waste' following the separate interment of the bodily remains along with a selection of the accompanying pyre goods. However, the term 'waste' may be somewhat inaccurate. It is likely that this residual material was interred with at least a degree of ritual and ceremony and may itself have undergone a process of selection from the general mass of pyre debris. The study of the ceramic assemblage has revealed an element of selection is indeed evident. The collection of vessels was by no means complete and was largely limited to the retrieval of the larger sherds, often surviving as a third or more of the vessel. The bias toward the collection of semi-complete vessels over smaller sherds, shows that the remains of the pyre goods were picked out by hand rather than collected wholesale in debris collection and removal. Indeed, the lack of fuel debris — principally ash and charcoal — accompanying the ceramic assemblage, may be a further indication of this selectivity. However, the creation of remarkably little such debris has been noted during experimental pyre firings, with as much as 900kg of wood being reduced to 3.8kg of charcoal and ash (McKinley 1997b, 71), so that the presence of only minimal quantities in deposit 15416 may not necessarily be so significant. In contrast, the absence of any collectable or identifiable fragments of cremated bone is clearly significant — retrieval of the bodily remains had taken place before this secondary collection of pyre goods. This may also account for the virtual absence of metalwork; just a single small fragment of copper-alloy sheet (SF6639) was recovered, which is not obviously burnt.

While the assemblage is clearly derived from a pyre site, its composition perhaps has more affinities with the *pyre-related* features. There is a clearer emphasis on the 'disposal' of goods, rather than of waste, which, together with the far more concerted collection of surviving pyre goods, suggests that this was a more structured and symbolic activity than that which resulted in the deposits within pyre-related features. It is therefore likely that the majority of surface debris, more specifically the pyre goods component, was disposed of in 'debris dumps' of this kind. The remaining surface material, principally charcoal, the smaller sherds of pottery and the metalwork not selected for inclusion with the burial (particularly nails), was thus disposed of in the close proximity of the pyre sites — hence the presence of pyre-related pits.

Given that the act of cremation took place on what appears to have been actively farmed land, it seems curious that the debris was not simply ploughed into the soil as part of the symbolic act of returning the deceased's physical remains to the earth, as indeed is perceived to be the case with the actual burial. It is possible that the remainder of the pyre debris, with its high content of pottery sherds (for example, deposit 15416), was regarded as contaminating rubbish that required removal from the field. Of course, the removal of pyre debris could have had its own rituals and symbolism that required its own form of burial — hence the more structured disposal of deposit 15416.

Late Iron Age discussion

These Late Iron Age funerary features, being more abundant and varied in nature than those of later date, give a broad insight into burial practice at this time. All the major aspects of this particular form of cremation burial practice are represented, perhaps with the exception of the pre-cremation rites. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this may have been only one of a number of types, or variants, of funerary practice current at the time. As is widely acknowledged, the small numbers of Late Iron Age burials and cemeteries known to date suggests that less conspicuous methods of disposal were also practised and that these related to the larger proportion of the Late Iron Age population.

It is likely that the funerary practice of cremation and of cremation burial, at least in its archaeologically conspicuous form, was confined to the elite of society. As a method of disposal, requiring as much as a tonne of wood fuel and presumably a significant amount of

preparation and tending, cremation was a costly undertaking in terms of time and physical resources. This is particularly true in comparison with *straightforward* excarnation or inhumation — both of which could have been practised in parallel.

Bearing in mind the opportunities afforded for conspicuous display, either of the corpse, or of individual and collective wealth, prestige and status, it can be argued that cremation was particularly suited to the needs of a Late Iron Age elite. As suggested by the presence of primary silting in the pyre flues, it is possible that the corpse was exposed or 'laid in state' on the pyre; perhaps dressed in finery that included brooches indicative of their status. To this was presumably added a range of grave goods, both organic and inorganic, some of which contained or included 'offerings' of food, drink and perhaps auspicious or symbolic material (*e.g.* foliage, flowers, *etc.*). It is likely that further artefacts and offerings were added to the pyre once the process of cremation was underway. Ceramic vessels, perhaps thrown onto the pyre at this point, may not have been 'offerings' or pyre goods in the strict sense, but the remnants of feasting that had preceded or accompanied the rite of cremation. This aspect of ritual feasting is most evident in the ceramic assemblage of debris deposit 15416, which clearly does not parallel the composition of a domestic assemblage. The majority of vessels may be classed as tableware, comprising items used for both the serving and consuming of food (platters, bowls) and liquids (amphorae, flagons, beakers). The single mortarium represented may suggest a degree of preparation of the 'feast', while jars may have had a rather miscellaneous use in this context.

On the face of it, this feasting involved the consumption of wine — at the time, *the* high-status drink. The presence of beakers and flagons suggests that it is likely that the amphorae contained liquids of some sort and that their consumption, either symbolic or actual was part of the funerary rite. The platters, and perhaps the very large bowl, similarly indicate the activity of eating alongside that of drinking. These both suggest communal participation in the act of feasting, perhaps even the distribution of food amongst the gathered mourners as part of the conspicuous display of wealth, status and generosity — the destruction of the exotic commodities on the pyre being the ultimate expression of this. However, animal bone is absent from any of the Late Iron Age funerary deposits, cremated or not. This has similarly been noted in the majority of the Welwyn-type burials (Stead 1967, 45) and may suggest that the consumption of meat, or at least its deposition on the pyre or in the grave was taboo.

Whether or not such an assemblage is an accurate reflection of the status of the deceased is debatable. The modified amphora and the relative age and particular rarity of some of the other vessels (*i.e.* the Pompeian Red Ware platter and Italian mortarium) can be variously interpreted. Much depends upon the process(es) by which such large assemblages of relatively exotic pottery were accumulated for funerary use. The whole or part could have been personal possessions of the deceased, which would infer their wealth and status fairly directly. Alternatively, all or part could have been brought to the pyre site by the mourners — singly or otherwise, taken from their own possessions or drawn from across the wider community. If a feasting scenario is accepted, then this may have depended on whomever was obliged or privileged to supply it. It is most likely that both the deceased and their family provided the majority of pyre goods, offerings and (if deemed applicable) feasting paraphernalia.

The pyre sites are the most informative as regards demographics and the availability of cremation as a funerary option. The rite of cremation was not confined to a particular section of society on the grounds of gender or age; both young and old, male and female, are represented in the cremated human bone recovered. However, nineteen pyre sites and only two cremation burials cannot represent the total settlement mortality for the period they span. While further graves were no doubt located elsewhere (*e.g.* New Cemetery, Heybridge) this is perhaps less likely in the case of the pyre sites. Pottery from the latter indicates the, presumably sporadic, occurrence of the cremation act over a period of as much as sixty years (end of 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD). The absence of associated burials suggests that the location of the pyre sites retained this exclusivity of function throughout this time (albeit in parallel with agriculture) and so it may be presumed that this was the recognised place of cremation for the settlement population — or at least for those whose status merited this particular funerary rite.

Where identification of cremated bone has been possible, only a single individual is represented at each of the pyre sites and related features. This almost certainly shows that the pyres were single-use structures, and that they can be accepted as reliable evidence for the cremation of nineteen deceased individuals. It has been suggested for the Late Iron Age and early Roman periods that *any* kind of formal burial was perhaps a mark of significant status (*e.g.* Struck 2000, 86). If so, the resulting average mortality figure of one death per three years might infer a reasonably sizeable elite component of society that was either resident at Heybridge or was focused on the settlement as a place of social and funerary significance.

Study of other Late Iron Age settlements such as Baldock have revealed multiple cemeteries located outside their occupation areas (Burleigh 1995, fig.16.2). The presence of cremation burials at the New Cemetery suggests that this was also the case at Heybridge. The disparate graves at Elms Farm, particularly burial 8177, may be explained in terms of occasional occurrences within the settlement peripheries that may have had some boundary significance. Such burials may have had a parallel function and symbolism to some forms of structured deposit (Chapter 6); perhaps the spirits of the deceased were believed to protect the settlement. Even if a number of formal cemeteries were located elsewhere outside Heybridge, it is unlikely that their total number would account for the whole Late Iron Age population. As mentioned previously, it is unlikely that every individual received a formal burial. It is suggested that the final act of interment was not necessarily the climax of the funerary rite or perhaps even a necessary part of it at all. Instead, more emphasis may have been placed upon the act and rituals of cremation itself.

It could also be the case that, although the majority of the population may have been cremated, those of lower status had less elaborate, entirely surface-built, pyres that have not left distinctive traces. Similarly, their remains may not have been disposed of in a recognisable or

archaeologically visible way. Indeed, the evidence of an elaborate mortuary chamber from Folly Lane, Hertfordshire, (Niblett 1999; Niblett 2000) may indicate that that the *pre*-cremation rites were most important and that the rather understated 'burial' was a relatively minor final act.

The wealth of pyre goods found both at the pyre sites and in debris deposit 15416 is in sharp contrast to the rather restricted and mundane grave-good assemblages of the various Late Iron Age burials found in and around Heybridge. This may merely suggest that correspondingly rich graves, perhaps akin to those of Welwyn-type, have yet to be discovered in the general vicinity of the pyre sites. Similarities have been noted between the pyre debris assemblage in deposit 15416 and pyre debris of Welwyn-type elite burials. Perhaps the debris found at Elms Farm derived from less ostentatious cremation events. Wickenden (1986, 62) has speculated that the amphora burial from The Towers and perhaps that from Boucherne's Farm may indeed constitute Welwyn-type graves. However, it is also possible that, given the suggested emphasis on the earlier stages of the funerary process, grave assemblages simply do not accurately reflect the wealth or status of the deceased. If this is the case, we should be wary of making too many social inferences based solely on the evidence from graves.

III. Roman
(Fig. 7.3 and Table 7.3)

In contrast with the Late Iron Age, evidence of Romano-British funerary practice is confined purely to that of burials. A total of twenty cremation burials and a single inhumation are further supplemented by what appears to be two partial inhumations in purpose-made cuts (Table 7.3 and Fig. 7.3). These span the mid 1st to 4th centuries AD (and perhaps into the 5th century) and, together with data from burials found elsewhere in the immediate vicinity of Heybridge, shed light on the changing nature and location of funerary practices throughout the Roman period.

Early Roman
At Elms Farm, the early Roman period (mid 1st–mid/later 2nd centuries AD) burials are exclusively cremation; twenty graves occurred in Areas D, M, R and W (Table 7.3). It is clear that the peripheral location of burials persisted into the early Roman period. On the evidence of hinterland burials 554, 557, 559, 564, 572 and perhaps 43, it is likely that the Late Iron Age practice of locating funerary features in the cultivated fields surrounding the settlement, close to major boundaries, continued post-conquest. However, like Late Iron Age burial 8177, some were also placed within the settlement, albeit on or toward its margins. Some, such as graves 15017 and 15040 (Group 702), were located at the very rear of occupation enclosures and presumably relate directly to the inhabitants of such plots. In Area D, a cluster of four graves (9329, 9665, 9927 and 9928) was inserted into the top of a pit, itself located at the end of a major, but defunct, boundary ditch; thus, again, a boundary significance is evident. No graves were found singly, which may suggest that such enclosures sometimes had small 'family' burial areas within them. It is unclear what this tells us about the occupants of the land plots in which these cremation burial

groups occur. Was the close relationship between the living and the dead, often so evident in Late Iron Age funerary and magico-religious activity, perpetuated into the Roman period? Were the families of the deceased simply too poor, or of insufficient status, to permit burial in a formal cemetery?

The assemblages in all of the early Roman graves were relatively simple, generally containing a single ceramic vessel, although three features (9665, 15017 and 15040) comprised three vessels each. Metalwork in all cases was mundane, being restricted to iron and particularly nails. Only in unurned burial 564 did the metalwork suggest the presence of a box, although the occasional hobnail was recovered from three others. In each case, these hobnails had been deposited with the cremated bone in the cinerary urn and, in the absence of significant quantities of other material, are likely to constitute pyre material that had been deliberately selected for inclusion. In addition, their presence within the cinerary urn indicates that what we might regard as having been reduced to pyre debris was, in fact, perceived as worthy of being a grave good. Clearly, the deceased wore, or was otherwise equipped with, shoes upon the pyre in a parallel practice to that regularly observed in inhumation burials of this period (*e.g.* the East London cemeteries; Barber and Bowsher 2000). Apart from occasional hobnails and simple nails, the inclusion of other pyre debris was minimal in either the ceramic vessels or the surrounding grave cut. Very small quantities of charcoal, burnt flints and slag were present, often dispersed throughout the grave backfill. Whether or not these constituted deliberate and symbolic inclusions of pyre debris is unclear.

Amongst the early Roman burials were three unurned examples (559, 564, 9329). Burial 564 appears to have contained the cremated remains within, or alongside, a wooden box. However, both burials 559 and 9329 were less convincing 'graves' amid small groupings of more obvious burials. While these could have constituted 'memorials' in their own right, it remains possible that they were some sort of ancillary features alongside the 'proper' burials.

It is interesting that the pair of cremation burials from Area M (15017 and 15040), while containing larger and more diverse grave-good assemblages, yielded cremated human bone that was noticeably less well burnt than the others. In general, the early Roman burials attest to an efficient process of cremation (Vol. 2, Section 4.5), although the lower spine remains in grave 9216 were only charred. The latter example may be a simple case of differential burning, but the generally poor cremation of the remains from the Area M burials suggests a lesser degree of care or effort expended. It is possible that the pair were cremated at the same time, perhaps even on the same pyre. The fact that two individuals, one adult, the other immature, are represented in the remains from 15040, and that neither burial contained particularly well-represented/selected remains, may indicate that the collection of cremated bone from the pyre site was not undertaken in a particularly careful or exhaustive manner. What these details mean in terms of the circumstance of the funerary process is difficult to know. The cremation of two individuals on a single pyre may account for the lesser degree of burning exhibited. Alternatively, this may have been due to a lack of expertise or resources on the part of whoever conducted the cremation.

Mid Roman

Cremation, as the dominant funerary practice, apparently continued into the mid Roman period at Heybridge. A group of seven, possibly eight, cremation burials, dated to the mid to late 2nd century, were located on the north bank of the watercourse that defined the northern settlement periphery. In contrast to the scatter of early Roman 'incidental' burials, which were often located within the settlement area, these formed a more cohesive group that can perhaps be viewed as a small formal cemetery. In further contrast to the earlier graves, they contained relatively rich and diverse assemblages of goods that included multiple ceramic vessels of various kinds (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2.8), glass vessels and metalwork.

The burials were of two types: boxed cremations with relatively varied and elaborate assemblages of grave goods occupying deeper square cuts; and simpler assemblages of one or two vessels occupying shallow rounded cuts. Despite containing well-structured grave-good assemblages, cremated human remains were absent from burials 12038, 12105, 12120 and 12208. Perhaps not too dissimilar to the 'token' early Roman burials discussed above, it seems that the burial rite did not necessitate the complete or even particularly representative presence of the deceased's physical remains.
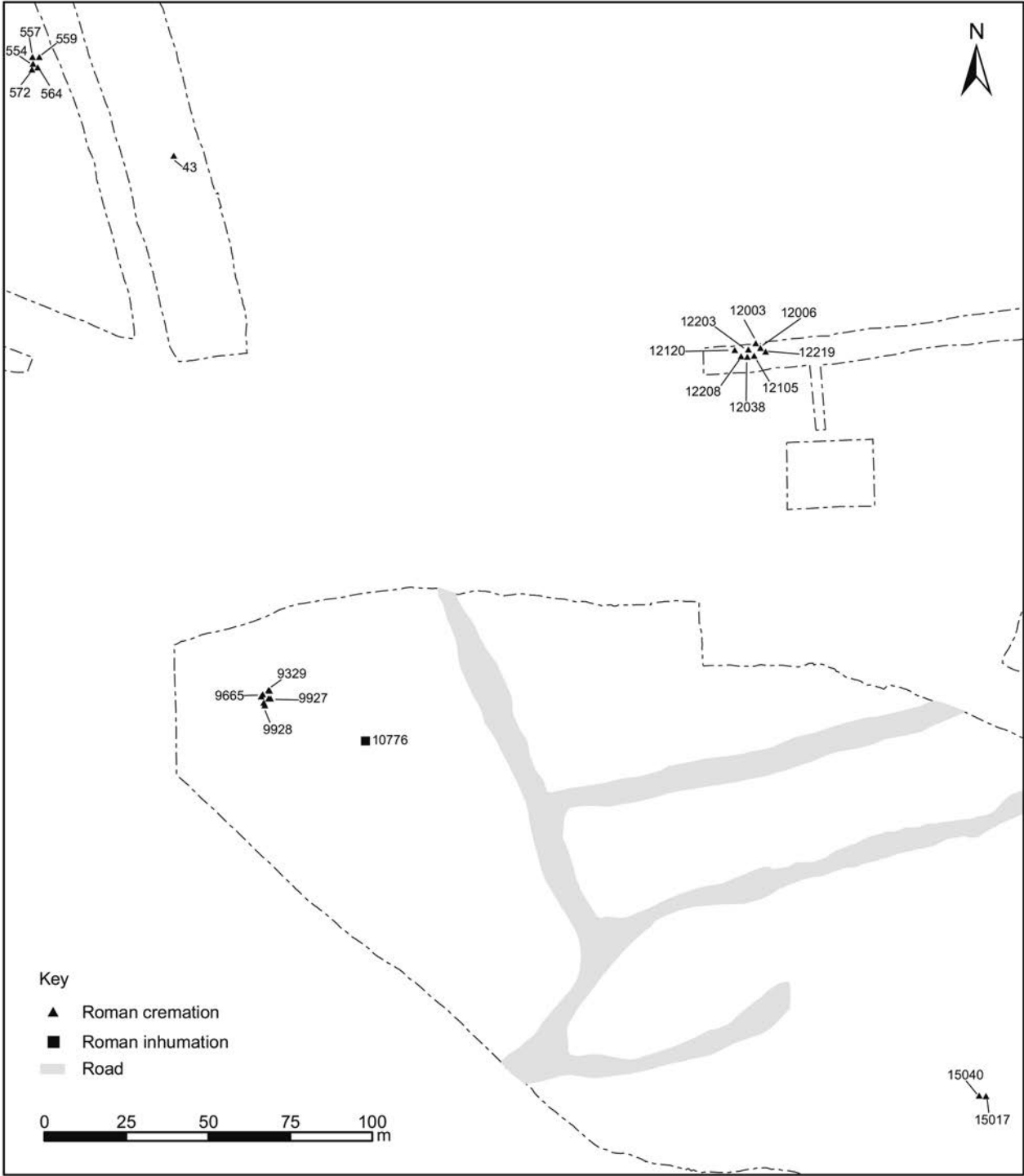
Figure 7.3 The Roman burials

Table 7.3 Summary of Roman funerary features and finds

Date	Area	Feature No	Cremated Bone (g)	Metalwork	Pottery	Other	Pyre debris	Bone ID	Bone notes
Early Roman									
		43 (Group 893)	330*	-	Jar	-	Char, ash	Adult ?female	
		554 (Group 893)	491* + out	-	Jar	-	Char, b.flint	Adult male	
	W	557 (Group 893)	145* + out	nail	Jar	-	Char, hobnail*	Adolescent/adult	
		559 (Group 893)	125	-	-	-	Char	?adult	
		564 (Group 893)	19	7 nails + box fittings?	Flask	-	Char, slag, b.flint	?	
		572 (Group 893)	2* + out	Nail	Jar	-	Char, slag	?	
		9329 (Group 781)	-	-	-	Burnt animal, animal*	Char?	-	
	D	9665 (Group 781)	810*		2 jars, 1 beaker	Animal, animal*	1 nail*, slag	Adolescent?	
		9927 (Group 781)	1057*		Jar	-	4 nails*, b.flint*	?older adult	
		9928 (Group 781)	614*		Jar	-	1 nail*, b.flint	Adult	
	M	15017 (Group 702)	713*	2 nails, 2 lumps	Jar, flagon, lid	-	2 hobnails*	Adult	Poorly burnt
		15040 (Group 702)	572 ?	3 nails	Jar, dish, small jar	Glass frag	1 hobnail*, char	?Adult + juven	Mod well burnt
Mid Roman									
		12003 (Group 964)	1600*	-	Jar, flask	Animal	Char	Adult + immat	
		12006 (Group 964)	1107*	-	Jar, beaker, cup	-		?younger adult	
		12038 (Group 964)	-	-	Flask	-	Char		
	R	12105(Group 964)	-	-	2 jars	Burnt animal	Char		
		12120(Group 964)	-	-	Jar	-		-	
		12203 (Group 964)	239*	26 nails + hanging lamp	Jar, beaker, dish, flask, flagon, cup	Glass flask, glass bead	14 counters*, Fe objects*	Immature, c. 6yrs	
		12208 (Group 965)	-	-	Misc. pot	-		-	
		12219 (Group 964)	868*	-	2 jars, flask, dish	Glass cup	Melted glass	Adult ?female	

* = material/object in main vessel

However, the remaining four mid Roman burials did yield significant quantities of cremated bone, particularly 12003 that contained large, poorly burnt, fragments. Perhaps significantly, these same burials also contained the more elaborate grave-good assemblages (*i.e.* 12003, 12006, 12203 and 12219). Collectively, a certain degree of status can be inferred for the group, particularly from the relatively large grave-good assemblage from 12203. This was by far the most elaborate burial of the group, being boxed or shuttered and containing an array of five different ceramic ancillary vessels in addition to the cinerary urn. This was further supplemented with an iron hanging lamp, glass flask and bead. The urned cremated remains were accompanied by a number of iron fragments and fourteen burnt bone counters that had clearly been pyre goods. Most interestingly, this was the grave of an immature individual, perhaps as young as six years old; the overall richness and overt symbolism of items such as the lamp may have been in response to a premature death. The range of ages from child to adult, apparent even within the small sample of burials yielding cremated remains (Vol. 2, Section 4.5), suggests that this cluster of graves represents a small and cohesive group — most probably a single family.

The various cremated remains display inconsistent burning and fragmentation, but generally careful, even and reasonably thorough selection or collection from the pyre. Inclusion of pyre debris was fairly minimal, with charcoal being obvious in only three graves. In contrast to the early Roman burials, no traces of shoes were identified, but the burnt bone counters in 12203 and fragments of a melted glass vessel in 12219 clearly indicate the inclusion of a range of valuable items on the pyre.

The location of these burials, across the watercourse from the settlement (connotations of the Styx?), may be significant. No enclosure was identified, although later ditch 25270 may have been a perpetuation of their eastern limit. Similar small cemeteries occur at other Roman 'small towns' such as Kelvedon, where sixty inhumations and thirty-five cremations were interpreted as a family cemetery used over a period of several hundred years (Rodwell, K.A., 1988, 50). At Dunmow, some fourteen cremation burials of 1st- to 2nd-century date were found within a small enclosure on the Redbond Lodge site (Wickenden 1988, 12–21). Other similar cemeteries are postulated elsewhere on the peripheries of the town (Wickenden 1988, 90). Enclosed cremation cemeteries also occur at Skeleton Green (Partridge 1981, 245–8). Most pertinently, another small 'cemetery' has been excavated on the periphery of Heybridge, at the Langford Road site (Langton and Holbrook 1997, 24–8). Here, five to seven cremations and one possible inhumation, all of late 2nd- to mid 3rd-century date, occupied a similar enclosure to that at Dunmow. The Elms Farm 'cemetery', though small and possibly incomplete, thus indicates that marginal clustering of burials in extended family groups, or even small communal cemeteries, was a common pattern at secondary centres across the region.

Late Roman
While Wickenden's suggestion that the laws relating to the location of inhumation burials beyond the limits of 'towns' were more strictly adhered to than for cremation burials (Wickenden 1986, 63–4) may well be true in general, Elms Farm contained some anomalies. A single inhumation 10776 (Group 809) was located in the northern settlement zone, in Area E. With no trace of a coffin and lacking grave goods, the skeleton of a young woman lying face down with the arms drawn in to the chest perhaps indicates an *ad hoc*, but shrouded, burial (Vol. 2, Section 4.5). This isolated burial, apparently opportunistically inserted into the top of a slumped mid 3rd-century pit, could be interpreted as evidence for the marked south and westward contraction of the settlement area. However, while this may be true to an extent, it is more likely that the location of this burial indicates the breakdown of spatial organisation within the settlement and a disregarding of hitherto respected burial laws by the end of the mid Roman period (if these ever operated beyond urbanised places). Fourth century burials in extra-mural plots at Ilchester (Somerset) have been similarly interpreted as denoting '… decline of standards within a contracting settlement' (Burnham and Wacher 1990, 31). The late Roman inhumation burials at Shepton Mallet could be regarded in the same light (Leach 2001, 312–13). However, inhumations at the villa/rural settlement at Dalton Parlours (West Yorkshire) show that inclusion of burials within the settlement was the normative practice, clearly displaying a use of the liminal symbolism of its enclosure boundary ditches (Wrathmell and Nicholson 1990, fig. 113).

The presence of two further late Roman 'burials' adds to this picture of decline. Again in Area E, 4th-century square cuts 8142 and 8155 contained semi-articulated human remains, the former representing the lower half of a skeleton and the latter the upper half (Vol. 2, Section 4.5). Both sets of remains were male and of probable middle to older age and it is probable that both derived from the same individual. While these cannot be regarded as one or more burials *per se*, it seems that they result from the disturbance and reburial of an inhumation in the immediate vicinity. Articulation of the arm in cut 8142 and the cranium and mandible in cut 8155 indicate that this occurred soon after interment.

While it is apparent that these features had little to do with the formal disposal of the dead, they serve to show that the encroachment of inhumation burials into the settlement area continued into the late Roman period. This may be seen to coincide with the contraction and decline of the settlement. The appearance of casual burials, such as 10776, and of more *ad hoc* deposits of human body parts, may also signify the disintegration of Roman burial customs themselves. Whether this constitutes evolution or change in Romanised religious belief or the adoption of new and strange superstitious practices is discussed in Section 7. However, the occurrence of semi-articulated remains in late Roman contexts is not without parallel. Esmonde-Cleary has identified the occurrence of such body parts as constituting 'non-normative disposal' or perhaps more appropriately 'post-mortem manipulation' of the dead, recognising that they did not cease to influence the lives of the living (2000, 136).

The lack of further late Roman inhumations within the excavated settlement area may simply indicate that these were incidental occurrences and that the place(s) of formal burial had again shifted away from its apparent mid Roman location to elsewhere. This would indeed seem to be the case judging from the evidence of The Towers inhumation 'cemetery', located some 1km to the east of

the settlement centre, with its one lead and four stone coffins (Wickenden 1986, 55–7). This probably represents the latest phase of Roman burial found so far. Although few details are known of their location, particularly in relation to one another, it is likely that they formed, or were part of, a small group of comparatively high-status burials, rather than part of a more extensive cemetery. However, a position alongside a postulated line of the east road out of the settlement remains likely. It is conceivable that these burials were associated not with the settlement but with an outlying high-status dwelling such as a villa — although, admittedly, none is known in this vicinity. Comparisons can also be made with the late 4th-century group of inhumations at Chigborough Farm (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 98 and fig.75), representing another out of town, though lower-status, group.

Saxon
In contrast to the preceding Roman periods, there were no burials of Saxon date found at Elms Farm. This absence is not particularly surprising given the low density of early Saxon occupation across the site, although the large part of a carinated bowl in 15862 (Vol. 2, Section 3.3), a fill of pit 24456 in Area M, may be the hitherto unrecognised remains of a cremation burial inserted into the top of the earlier feature. However, three Saxon cremation burials (probably) found at The Towers alongside the late Roman inhumations (Drury and Wickenden 1982, 30, 34–5) clearly indicate a continued use of burial grounds, if not of funerary practice itself, perhaps even beyond the life of the settlement.

IV. Conclusion

Although rather sporadic, the funerary evidence from Elms Farm does allow a degree of further interpretation from the overview presented by Wickenden, which drew from finds made in the vicinity of Heybridge over the previous century or so (1986, 53–60). Together with the burials recovered from the Langford Road site, they constitute the only formally excavated and properly recorded examples.

As a single aspect of funerary activity at Elms Farm, the Late Iron Age pyre sites and pyre-related features of Area W constitute the most important discovery. Rarely found, or rarely recognised, in Britain they supplement those at Westhampnett (Fitzpatrick 1997a). More significantly, they make a real contribution to our understanding of the distinctive cremation burial practices of the territories of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni (essentially Essex and Hertfordshire). While the burials of both the 'Aylesford-Swarling' tradition and the elite Welwyn-style graves (Niblett and Bryant 1997) have set the scene for Late Iron Age funerary practice in the region, their contribution to the understanding of pre-burial processes has been limited. More recently, greater insights have been afforded by the Stanway burials (Crummy 1993) and particularly the Folly Lane mortuary chamber, probable pyre site and grave, which included pyre debris (Niblett 2000). However, the Elms Farm features could be perceived as another part of the jigsaw. The pyre sites shed further light on the early stages of the Late Iron Age funerary process and, although it is difficult to determine the status of the individual pyre sites, largely due to the lack of associated graves, pyre debris deposit 15416 may

suggest that some, at least, could have culminated in the creation of an elite Welwyn-style burial (location unknown).

However, it should be borne in mind that 'lower-status' cremations of the kind found at King Harry Lane could have had elaborate pyre structures and assemblages that were simply not transferred to or replicated/mirrored in the graves. Niblett has commented, in relation to Folly Lane being an elite rite, that '…it is worth considering whether a similar but "watered down" version was practised by less elevated groups in society' and has speculated that this resulted in burials such as those at Stanway (2000). It is tempting to view the Elms Farm pyre evidence as the 'missing link'.

What may be reasonably deduced from the collective examples across Essex and Hertfordshire is that the rites of cremation and burial were almost always carried out in separate and widely distanced locations. There were no contemporary burials within a known radius of 100m of the pyre sites. If the debris deposit 15416 (Group 33) is taken as a parallel of the distancing of graves from the pyre sites, then a separation of 500m or more is possible. This distinction was largely perpetuated in Late Iron Age graves themselves where, apart from token inclusions, pyre goods and debris were not deposited. An exception may well be Lexden Tumulus that, in the opinion of Compton and Sealey (Vol. 2, Section 3.7.11.2), contains material that is indeed burnt, contrary to the conclusion of Jenny Foster (1986). A further exception may be the grave at Folly Lane (Niblett 2000) that contained an array of pyre debris along with 142g of cremated human bone. However, the 'burial pit' is conspicuously simple, lacking both structure and ostentation, which is at odds with the physical evidence of the preceding rites.

In the light of the Elms Farm evidence for the treatment of pyre debris, it is perhaps possible to contemplate a degree of reinterpretation along the lines of the pit constituting the ritual disposal of debris with the formal burial located elsewhere. Folly Lane is clearly an exceptional site, as indicated by the location of most, if not all, of the key elements of the funerary rites undertaken in close proximity. However, this is just one of a very small sample of funerary sites of this nature and we could alternatively view such variations in composition of burials (*e.g.* inclusion of burnt versus unburnt goods, presence/absence of cremated body, and treatment of the pyre site and debris) as subject to a range of local, regional and chronological variations in practice and belief.

A final comment to be made specifically on the subject of Late Iron Age pyre sites and cremation burials, is that further discoveries of great importance for our understanding of pre-Roman funerary practices remain to be made. These will not necessarily take the form of elaborate burials, but it is hoped that, together with the example of Westhampnett, Elms Farm will stimulate others to look for and recognise further instances of cremation-related features.

The rite of cremation was clearly the principal form of burial from at least the late 1st century BC up to the end of the 2nd century AD. This is not to assume that inhumation was not practised in parallel, but that this has not so far been identified at Heybridge. Cremation practice followed the same general format throughout this period, although consideration of the details of location, form and content of these burials and associated funerary features reveals

differences that may well have been the result of changing practices, beliefs and attitudes toward death and the disposal of the dead.

While study of such aspects as efficiency of cremation and burial treatment have identified spatial differences in contemporary burials, which may relate either to social circumstance or variation within accepted practice, there are real chronological trends evident too. The amount of effort, care or resources expended in the act of cremation appears to reduce over time. The Late Iron Age cremated remains are generally the most well burnt and the 2nd-century examples the least.

Although it is difficult to compare Late Iron Age and Roman grave-good assemblages like for like, given the disparity in numbers, the evidence from the pyre sites and their related features and deposits may suggest that funerary assemblages generally reduced both in quantity and range over time. It is possible that cremation burial (perhaps any kind of formal burial) become more available to a wider range of the population during the Roman period and that the inclusion of a range of grave goods was no longer the preserve of the elite — hence the use of fairly mundane pottery and the greater formalisation of assemblages. Status, or social circumstance, continued to be expressed through grave goods into the late 2nd century at Heybridge, but did not necessarily have the same connotations of elite-ness. As already mentioned, the relatively rich child's burial 12203 (Group 964) was most likely an expression of grief in the face of *mors immatura* (Martin-Kiltcher 2000).

The opening up of the cremation rite to the wider population, and the reduced status of those now being accorded this form of funeral, may be the reason for perceived declining standards of pyre technology and cremation. The apparent care taken in the construction and burning of the Late Iron Age pyres and the lavish array of exotic goods set upon them, may suggest a far grander occasion than that of the Roman funeral. Pre-Roman period funeral rites may have been community-wide events in contrast to the rather more personal affairs that are generally attested by later cremation burials. Indeed, a case has been made for the paired burials in Area M (15017 and 15040) being the product of the funeral of two related individuals of low status and that the whole process was perhaps undertaken by their close family. It is possible to speculate that in such 'lower-order' settlements, lacking the formal cemeteries and facilities of urban centres, the act of cremation was not carried out by specialists but by families or wider social groupings.

Changes that amount to both evolution and diversity in cremation burial practice can be charted through the 1st and 2nd centuries but, in essence, represent broad continuity through Late Iron Age to earlier Roman periods; perhaps due to the process of pre-conquest Romanisation (or Gallo-Romanisation?) that affected the principal recipients of such funerary practices — the elite. It is the later 2nd-century transition from cremation to inhumation as the dominant practice that is perhaps the most significant. Using the small sample of funerary features from Heybridge, it would be misleading to postulate a rapid change from one tradition to the other. However, as well as being a country-wide phenomenon, this took place at the same time as a number of changes within the settlement. These local changes include developments in particular aspects of settlement morphology (*e.g.* temple re-planning), apparent settlement contraction and/or depopulation and agricultural intensification or reorganisation. Thus, this marked change in funerary practice can be framed against a background of pronounced social and economic change.

While all evidence of inhumation practice at Elms Farm is restricted to the late Roman period and the interior of the settlement, it is unlikely that this provides the normative view. If anything, burial 10776 is a non-standard example and evidence from The Towers provides the normal pattern, external to the settlement. Of course, in the light of settlement contraction, even this burial could constitute a 'backland burial' of the type noted by Esmonde-Cleary to be present in some 'small towns', either in ordered or irregular groupings or as single instances (2000, 129, 138). Given the rather intermediary *status* of Heybridge, somewhere between an urban centre and rural settlement, it is unsurprising that it shares various funerary traits with a range of different settlement types, from town, to villa and village or farmstead.

As a whole, then, the cemetery evidence around the Elms Farm site suggests a piecemeal spread of small groups of graves around the periphery of the settlement rather than a single specifically designated official cemetery. Those from as far east as the Towers and Heybridge itself may, in fact, have little connection with the occupation on this site, given the distribution of other Late Iron Age and Roman remains in the area, which suggests a landscape bustling with human activity. A single large cemetery could still remain to be discovered, but this must be unlikely given the history of discoveries in the area. Alternatively, the late Roman inhumations at The Towers could have been late additions to a long-established cemetery, the earlier components of which were not recognised or recovered at the end of the 18th century. Such continuity or reuse of early Roman cremation cemeteries culminating as late Roman inhumation grounds is attested at such places as Kelvedon (Rodwell, K.A. 1988) and Skeleton Green (Partridge 1981, 245).

Chapter 8. Environment and Landscape

I. Introduction

The best summary of the known and projected landscape setting of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, prior to the Elms Farm excavations, is the map provided by Wickenden (1986, fig.2). This drew together evidence from all available sources. The results from Elms Farm (and the adjacent site at Langford Road) can now modify some of the details of this picture and allow reasoned speculation as to how Heybridge related to other settlements and the countryside on a region-wide basis.

It is evident that the location of the Late Iron Age settlement was very important and had a basis both in the agricultural and socio-political needs of the local population. Post-conquest, the emphasis quickly shifted to one of socio-*economic* importance. This is perceived to have had a profound effect upon the subsequent (lack of) development of the Roman-period settlement. Thus, it is

important to 'set the scene' of the wider context in order to appreciate the changes brought upon Heybridge.

II. Environment
(Fig. 8.1)

There is little point discussing the landscape environment of Heybridge beyond its specific setting within the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys, the estuary and the coast. While attempts have been made to characterise the Essex countryside of the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, these have been, by necessity, cursory and only partially successful. They have concerned themselves primarily with the structures of rural settlements rather than with the associated fields, natural resources and geography of the landscape itself (*e.g.* Going 1996). In fact, Heybridge occupies a part of what is one of the more
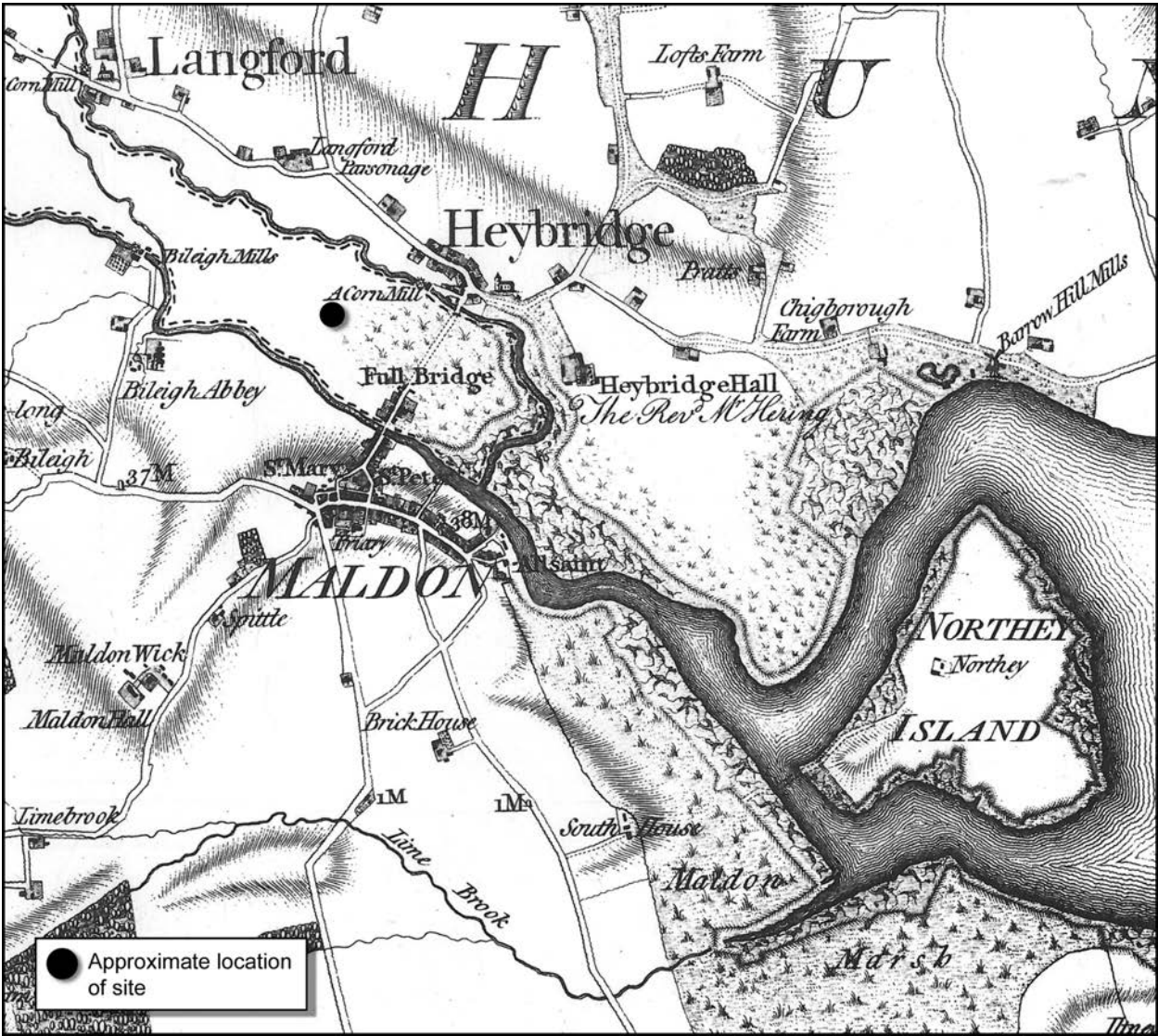
Figure 8.1 The Heybridge and Maldon area, 1777

extensively studied and understood tracts of the Essex countryside. Buckley and Hedges' excavation at Woodham Walter (1987) and Wallis and Waughman's excavations in the lower Blackwater valley (1998) provide an excellent background. Their respective considerations of the cropmark complexes that are widespread across the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys are particularly informative.

Aerial photography has revealed a highly developed agricultural landscape of farmsteads, field systems, paddocks and droveways that has been demonstrated to have its origins in the Middle Iron Age. This landscape had already reached its peak prior to the conquest and it is into this framework that the Area W field system at Elms Farm must be integrated. The river gravel terraces of these valleys were evidently farmed extensively using a mixed arable and pastoral regime, of which the mainstay has already been postulated to have been cereal crops (Chapter 4). Animal husbandry was also clearly important, cattle being the prime beast as a source of traction, meat and secondary products, but perhaps also as an indicator of wealth and status in the Late Iron Age. Thus, it is important to envisage the valley landscape as a patchwork of large fields of cereals and pasture and, closer to the proliferation of small farmsteads, smaller enclosures constituting 'kitchen gardens' and secure paddocks and pens for livestock. Such arrangements are clearly seen from cropmark photographs and plots, of which some are in close proximity to Heybridge (*e.g.* at Langford, Eddy 1980, 80 and Buckley and Hedges 1987, pl.XX and XXI).

While aerial photography has been successful in defining the major divisions of the agricultural landscape, it must be borne in mind that the vista was not simply one of ditches, crops and animals. The case for the cultivation of the hedge as a boundary and barrier has already been made for the settlement interior (Chapter 3) and hedges must also have been a major feature of the agricultural landscape beyond. Continuing on from this, woodland must have punctuated this agricultural landscape and individual trees must have been incorporated into the hedgerows. Given the apparently well-populated nature of the countryside, it is likely that woodland was a well-managed and valued resource.

While the valley slopes were cultivated and grazed predominantly by cows, the moist and low-lying land at the head of the estuary was covered with lush meadow grasses that gave way to tracts of salt marsh closest to the estuary itself. The meadows may have provided grazing for the larger numbers of cattle belonging to occupants of Heybridge while flocks of sheep may well have grazed the salt marsh. The importance of estuarine and coastal land and its resources to a 'marginal' settlement such as Heybridge should not be underestimated.

Fresh water was readily available from both the numerous springs along the gravel terrace edge and the various tributaries of the rivers Chelmer and Blackwater that once meandered across the lower valley terraces (*e.g.* the water channel through Area R) (Fig. 1.2).

The extent and proximity of the marsh environment has been a matter of some debate, since evidence from the Roman wells within the settlement area suggests that the hydrology of this location may have differed from that of today. It is generally accepted that sea levels were rising along the east coast of England through the Roman period until the middle of the 4th century, when a regression (Tilbury V) began (Wilkinson and Murphy 1995). But a contrary view is taken by Going (1996, 101–2), following Waddelove and Waddelove (1990), suggesting an early Roman lowering of sea level and later Roman rise. Murphy posits a Roman coastline some kilometres west of the current line, based on evidence from the Dengie peninsula (1996, 176). The absence of any evidence for the Tilbury V regression affecting the Blackwater Estuary, however, has been noted (Wilkinson and Murphy 1995, 60), as here estuarine deposition seems to have been continuous from the middle of the 2nd millennium cal. BC to the present, in contrast to much of the rest of this coast. No explanation has been offered for this odd observation.

Rising water levels are often cited as the reason for the abandonment of Red Hills during the 2nd century AD, with the short Tilbury V sea-level regression providing a neat context corresponding with a notable body of evidence for their reuse (albeit not for their original purpose; Sealey 1995) in the 4th century. There seems to be little evidence for such late re-occupation of Red Hills in the Blackwater area (EHER 7983, 8583, 7696, 7818), adding to the invisibility of this marine regression here.

However, it is likely that the salt marsh was extensive and reached the foot of the gravel terrace occupied by the settlement (Fig. 1.2). Trial trenching in Area C revealed very thick deposits of clay and alluvium within which were occasional Roman artefacts. Similarly, to the east, the salt marsh encroached close to the settlement and perhaps close to Road 3 as it continued east. It is likely that the marsh extent remained much the same until relatively recent times. The 1777 depiction of the Heybridge-Fullbridge area by Chapman and André (Fig. 8.1) shows the area to the east of Fullbridge as marshland. The causeway across the marsh is dotted, suggesting that it was usable only at low tide at this time. The history of Heybridge records several significant floods of the Blackwater; one such incursion of *c.* 1450 was severe enough to bring down part of St Peter's Church. Even the 1874 tithe map indicates areas 'liable to floods'. There is thus little reason not to believe that marshland has been an ancient and enduring feature of the estuary landscape.

The salt marsh was an important and well-utilised part of the landscape. As outlined in Chapter 4, as well as sheep grazing, salt-extraction would have been a common, if seasonal, sight. Red Hills have been recorded all around the Blackwater Estuary (Fawn *et al.* 1990; Wilkinson and Murphy 1995, 168) and it is interesting that the heyday of this activity appears to have been the 1st to earlier 2nd centuries AD, much the same as that of Late Iron Age and Roman Heybridge. This may not be a coincidence; Heybridge was in an excellent position to exploit this marginal land and much of this salt-winning activity may have been directly associated with the settlement.

Topography, hydrology and likely agricultural land use can all be used to define the likely settlement extent and, to some extent, explain the reasons for its location at this point in the landscape. However, these need to be considered alongside other, man-made factors, such as communication by land and river if Heybridge's place in the landscape is to be fully appreciated.

III. Routes of communication

Late Iron Age
(Figs 8.2 and 8.3)

As previously mentioned, the importance of Late Iron Age Heybridge is perceived to have had a social and political basis; perhaps as a tribal cult focus and a neutral meeting place (Chapter 5). Whatever the reason for the establishment of this function, good communications would have been paramount in order to support and sustain it.

It is likely that the coastal route along the terrace line, formalised by Roads 2 and 3, was the major one, rather than the inland, northwards Road 1 (Figs 8.2 and 8.3). To the east of the settlement, this principal route probably ran roughly parallel to the estuary. Its further extent and ultimate end (if it had one) cannot be estimated, although there are known to be Roman remains from Tollesbury at the mouth of the estuary. While it is speculated that the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys must have been important Late Iron Age inland routes, it appears that the crossing of the river Chelmer was a crucial aspect of settlement location and south/south-westward communication. The location of this crossing has been revealed by the excavations at Elms Farm to have been substantially different from that previously speculated by Drury (1980, 62). Formerly, it was assumed that the vicinity of the more recent crossing at Fullbridge was also that of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement. This was primarily based upon its near-alignment with the projected line of Maypole Road, assumed to be a fossilisation of the ancient road. However, the excavated course of Roads 1 and 2, most crucially 'between' Areas I, J and K, clearly shows that the road instead adopted a south-west course (Fig. 8.3).

Instead of crossing the Chelmer at Fullbridge and skirting around 'behind' the possible Iron Age hillfort at Maldon (Bedwin 1992, 22) it seems far more likely that the road headed for a crossing somewhere between the current 'new' road bridge and the site of Beeleigh Abbey. Field inspection of this vicinity by the author (M. Atkinson) has located a gravel layer in the south riverbank that coincides with a cluster of waterlogged posts at its foot. In the present day, this location is relatively easily crossed at low tide with gravel banks being exposed. Furthermore, a crossing at this point would have facilitated far easier access up the relatively gentle slopes of a side stream/valley on the south side, rather than the steep climb south of Fullbridge (*i.e.* up present-day Market Hill).

This revised location of the river crossing does not, of course, preclude a range of alternative crossings of the Chelmer at less formal spots during low tides — of which the Fullbridge crossing may well have been one. While this route may only have been established in the immediate pre-conquest period, the location of a possibly prehistoric 'mound' (EHER 7762) overlooking this side valley may hint at earlier origins. To the south-east, the later 1st-century BC burial enclosure at Maldon Hall Farm (Lavender 1991), may indicate further occupation activity alongside this route, as it perhaps curved around to a more westerly course. If the route via the hillfort at Danbury is accepted, then it is likely that the origins of this route were indeed ancient, the ultimate implication of this being that

Chelmsford, or a settlement close to this location, was itself of some importance during the pre-conquest period.

It is clear that the nature of Late Iron Age communication routes over land are poorly defined and understood and largely based upon the premise that some Roman roads perpetuated earlier routes. This, perhaps dangerously, assumes that Late Iron Age and Roman communication requirements were much the same. However, the changing status and fortunes that have been demonstrated for Heybridge should alert us to the fact that this was not always the case.

The second aspect of communication is that of water. In many ways, Heybridge was better positioned than Camulodunum in relation to navigable rivers and access to the coast via the estuary. The Blackwater is likely to have been navigable at least as far as Heybridge and shallow-drafted vessels may well have been able to reach inland as far as Chelmsford via the Chelmer. Whether or not the inland waterways were important communication routes in the Late Iron Age is debatable — their apparent boundary significance in this period suggests that they presented themselves as physical barriers or boundaries rather than lines of access. However, the estuarine location clearly attracted trade.

Imports, most visibly ceramic vessels, arrived at the settlement from the later 1st century BC onwards as discussed in earlier sections (Chapters 4 and 5, in particular). Whether this Late Iron Age continental trade was direct or indirect, it serves to show that waterways were utilised at least for longer-distance communication. The estuary provided one of a number of entries along the south-east coast into the hinterland and Heybridge may simply have been in the right place at the right time to benefit from the shift of pre-conquest political and economic contact from the south coast — essentially as the army moved up into the Rhineland during the Augustan period (Haselgrove 1987, 201).

Roman

Judging by the excavated evidence for the ongoing maintenance of the various roads within the settlement, it appears that the emphasis on the coastal plain route, certainly to the east of Heybridge, waned. Instead, Roads 1 and 2 became the more important land route, linking the settlement with Chelmsford to the west and, ultimately, Colchester to the north-east. The latter connection is stated with some caution.

Conventionally, depictions of the Roman road network for Essex show a northbound road from Heybridge (*i.e.* the projection of Maypole Road) veering off toward Stanway and Colchester, with a further road skirting Heybridge, which continues up between the Chelmer and Blackwater valleys to an unspecified junction that just might coincide with the vicinity of Witham (*e.g.* Drury and Rodwell 1980, fig.22; Wickenden 1986, fig.1; Going 1996, fig.1). However, the projection of excavated Road 1 at Elms Farm, combined with the consideration of local topography, indicates a rather different alignment of the northward road. Its apparent north-north-west course would, then, meet the postulated east–west valley route some 250–300m to the west of Maypole Road. If the road continued beyond this intersection, then a course toward Witham could be speculated. However, in the absence of cropmarks to verify the course of this road beyond its excavated extent,

it remains possible that it simply veered to connect with the Maypole Road alignment for which there is some cropmark information (see Wickenden 1986, fig.2, cropmark K). If so, it may be argued that while the turn (or branch) of the north road to Colchester may well be real, a northward continuation can readily be postulated. Thus, a direct link with the settlement at Kelvedon is created — which seems a reasonable thing to expect. The reasons for, and nature of, these links with the settlements at Witham and Kelvedon are discussed below. Whichever the course of the road immediately north of the excavated area, occupation enclosures identified in both the south-east corner of Area W and at the Langford Road site (Langton and Holbrook 1997) may thus be interpreted as the rears of plots fronting onto this route way in a ribbon development extending north from the main settlement.

Although the main axis of communications may have changed, the east route clearly remained a functioning one in the Roman period. The fact that the three 'side roads', Roads 3, 4 and 5, survived into the 4th century and continued to mark the limits of an important public space in front of the east-facing temple, attests to the continuing social, if not economic importance of this route — at least at a local level. As suggested in Chapter 7, the easterly amalgam of these roads into a single route beyond the settlement, may have continued from the Late Iron Age to function as a pilgrimage route. Drury's east–west road on

the Crescent Road site (Wickenden 1986, feature 303) is fictitious, being a misconstruing of the gravel terrace edge and perhaps gravelled occupation surfaces, and does not form any part of the road infrastructure excavated within the Elms Farm site.

Road 3 may have simply headed for the coast, Red Hills and oyster beds; there is known occupation at places such as Heybridge Hall (Bryant 1992; Holmes and Maull 2002). Alternatively, a major landing place serving the settlement, perhaps where the present last meander of the Blackwater occurs, could be posited. However, the importance of the route in relation to the settlement's religious focus would seem to indicate a bigger purpose and one that extends further out into the surrounding region, perhaps linking somewhat better with Wickenden and Drury's road cropmarks (Wickenden 1986, 62 and fig.2, cropmark F) than with Drury's non-road. Certainly, this route was important enough for the cemetery at The Towers, ostensibly with a Late Iron Age origin, to develop alongside it.

As has already been noted for the Late Iron Age, we are almost totally ignorant of lesser routes that linked this local centre with the various farmsteads and other occupation sites across the surrounding agricultural landscape. It must be supposed that a myriad of rather ephemeral, though potentially long-established tracks, connected Heybridge with the salt-processing sites along
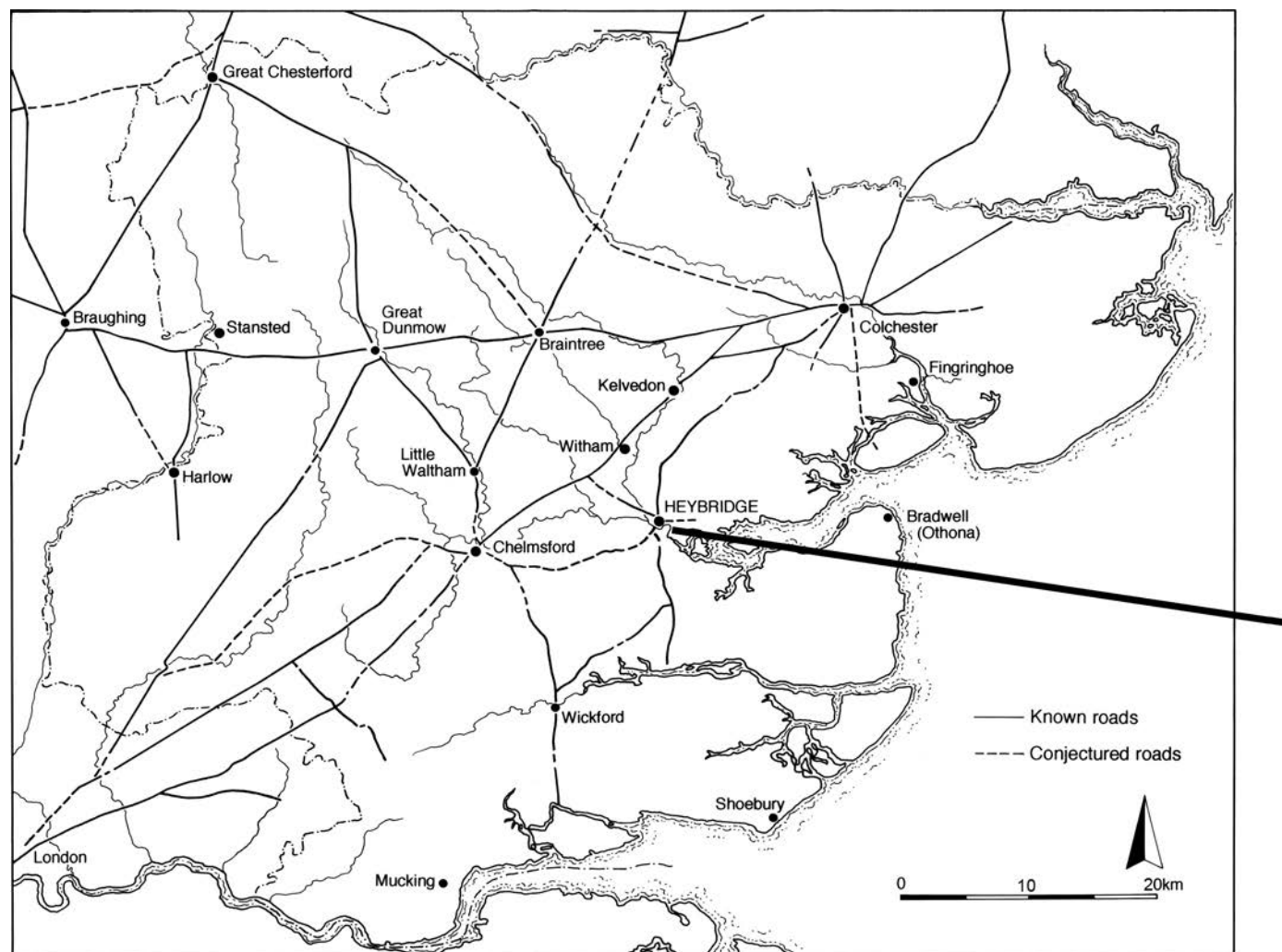
Figure 8.2 Heybridge and Roman Essex (and on facing page)

the salt marsh, settlements in the Dengie peninsula (including Othona fort at Bradwell) and the farms and other resources of the interior (*e.g.* the track at Slough House Farm; Wallis and Waughman 1998, 41). Small settlements no doubt developed along the roadsides, if not already established in the Late Iron Age. Indeed, Roman-period rubbish pits found in the railway cutting immediately west of Maldon (EHER 7776) may mark the location of a settlement at the proposed west turn in the road to Chelmsford.

The importance of communication by water is hardly better represented or understood for the Roman period than for the Late Iron Age. If anything, the volume of water-borne trade may well have decreased or at least become more localised as the production and market centres at Chelmsford and Colchester either replaced continental trade or else channelled it through themselves. This said, Heybridge was almost certainly on the coastal communication route and may have received much of its traded goods from Colchester in this way. In turn the settlement may well have contributed provisions to the garrison at Othona via water, rather than by land. This would certainly help explain the paucity of evidence for land routes into the Dengie peninsula.

Consideration of both geography and communications in this area gives important insights into why Heybridge, after such precocious Late Iron Age success, failed to prosper through the Roman period. The locational factors so conducive to its initial success were clearly less

appropriate by the end of the 1st century AD. What was an important node in the Late Iron Age route network was simply bypassed by Roman networks with different priorities that were increasingly based upon market economy and regional administration rather than the dynamics of tribal society and politics.

IV. Settlement pattern (local to regional)

Having discussed the established and likely routes of communication by land and water, it is necessary to place Heybridge in its wider context of settlement hierarchy and function on both a local and regional basis. For the purposes of this report, the 'local' is taken as its general sphere of influence that probably extended no further than settlements of comparable status and function (*e.g.* Kelvedon and Witham) and was more practically restricted to its surrounding hinterland. The 'regional' applies in this particular case to the perceived territory of the Trinovantes, rather than anything more expansive such as East Anglia or south-east England. However, some reference is made to landscapes and settlement relationships outside this tribal area for comparative purposes.

Late Iron Age
As has been argued in Chapter 5, Heybridge is likely to have been the centre, at least of local importance, in the
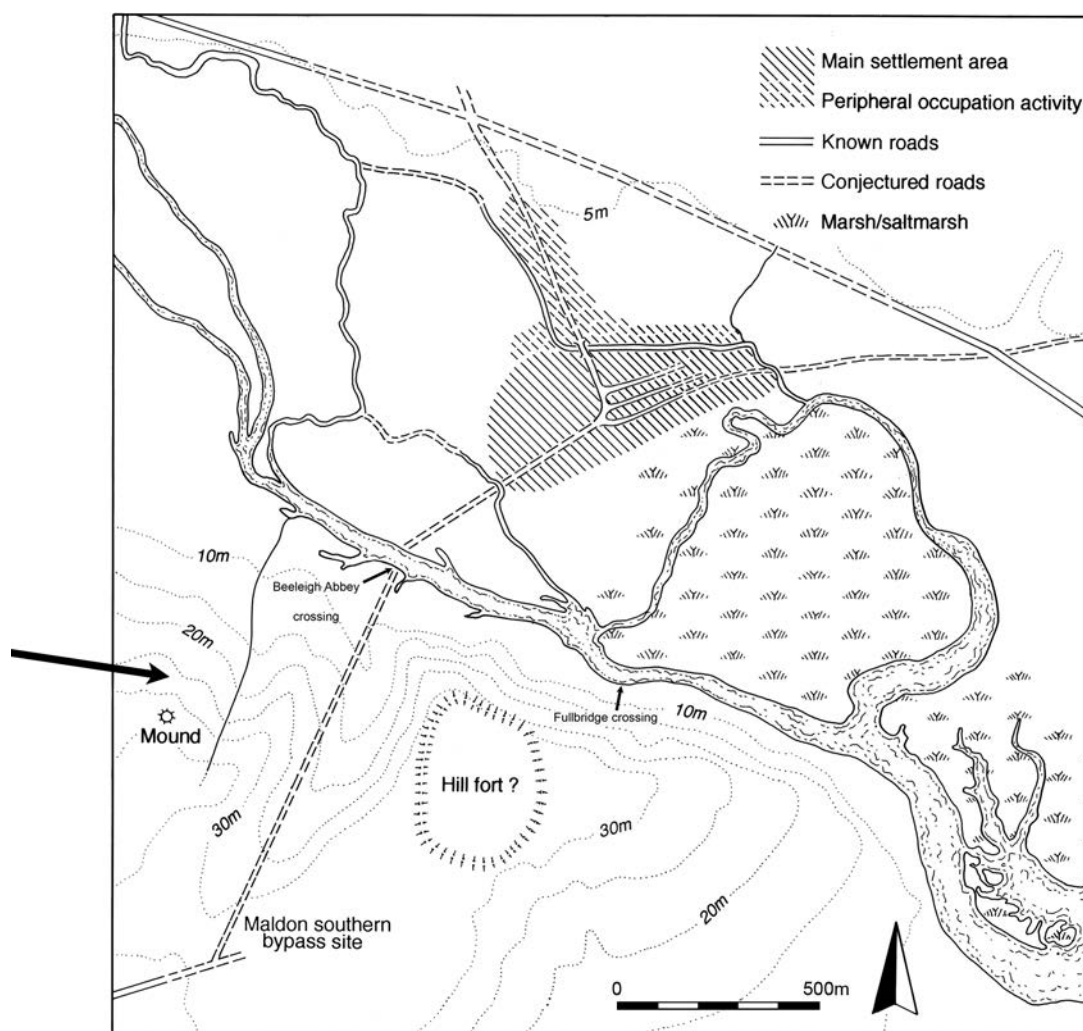
late 1st century BC to mid 1st century AD. While we have little understanding of the nature of the relationship between such a centre and the many farmsteads that occupied the surrounding landscape, it seems that this was primarily social, rather than economic, in character. A high level of self-sufficiency is assumed for the surrounding farms and it is evident, from the developed nature of Heybridge's immediate hinterland and from the range of activities undertaken within the settlement, that this was also generally the case for local centres. In essence, Heybridge was an agricultural community but the possession of a number of service functions over and above this general level of subsistence gave Heybridge its elevated status. An earliest expression of this may have been its ability to acquire prestige goods that were then presumably distributed through agencies of patronage and obligation.

Excavation in the lower Blackwater valley has identified a range of Late Iron Age and Roman sites (*e.g.* Wallis and Waughman 1998) that may be regarded as likely outlying settlements to Heybridge (Fig. 1.4) and with which its relationship was perhaps most intimate. All of these sites point to a densely occupied and managed agricultural landscape, and indeed, allowing for the haphazard nature of the evidence, the density of settlement seems to be in the order of one settlement every 1.5km, at least to the south of the river Chelmer. More often than not, sites yielding Late Iron Age material also yielded early Roman material, suggesting that in terms of location of settlement, at least, the conquest induced little immediate change in the area. However, this was not invariably the case; the cropmark complex trenched at Woodham Walter revealed a Middle and Late Iron Age enclosure that passed out of use in the latter half of the 1st century BC (Buckley and Hedges 1987, 44).

We do not yet know how many Late Iron Age local centres had the social and political functions that facilitated, perhaps even required, the acquisition of prestige goods within Trinovantian territory. To date, only Camulodunum and Heybridge have yielded significant assemblages indicative of this. It is presumed that more such centres existed, but have not yet been recognised through excavation. As has been noted in East Anglia, settlements with early imports tended to occupy coastal locations and it may be possible to see Heybridge as part of a wider, eastern England, phenomenon. Furthermore, speculation as to the location of similar Trinovantian settlements, perhaps in the vicinities of Wickford, Shoeburyness and Mucking, could be warranted.

However, there is an alternative interpretation that has a decidedly different, perhaps less archaeologically convenient, set of ramifications. This is that these local centres were few in number and 'served' very large areas, perhaps even entire tribal territories — hence the lack of comparable sites to the north and south of Heybridge and Camulodunum. However, this then immediately gives rise to the problem of these two settlements occupying similar positions in relatively close proximity to one another (*i.e.* approximately 20km apart). Instead of simply accepting this apparent duality of principal settlement, Heybridge could be regarded as the *precursor* of Camulodunum which, toward the mid 1st century AD had been eclipsed
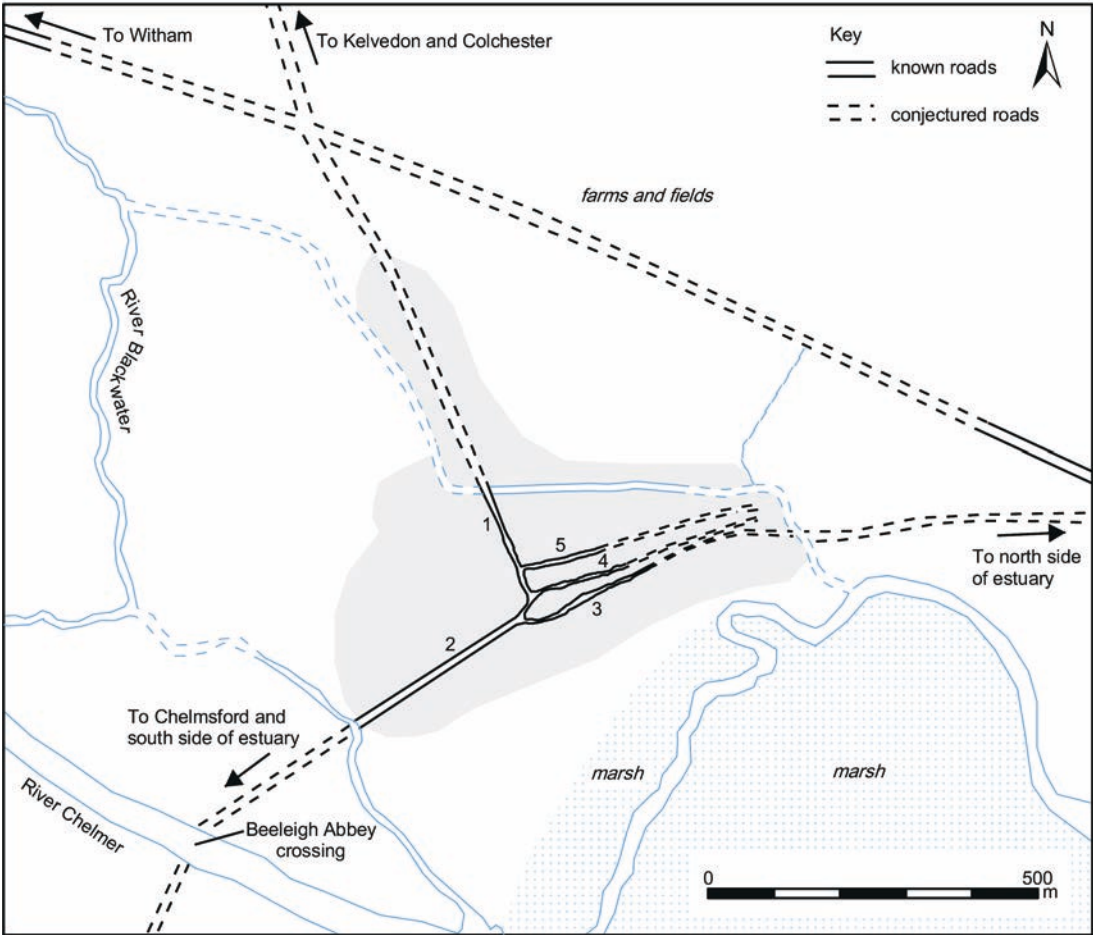
Figure 8.3 Roads and routes in and out of Heybridge

by its neighbour but continued to maintain an, albeit increasingly localised, importance amid the developing settlement pattern of the Roman period.

The resolution of the nature of the relationship between Heybridge and Camulodunum is therefore of crucial importance to any understanding of the settlement's wider role and significance prior to the mid 1st century AD. If Heybridge was a complementary site to Camulodunum, we can perhaps envisage a slightly more restricted influence, commensurate with its likely secondary status. Either way, Heybridge clearly possessed a social and political function, most likely as a cult centre, which may have accorded it a degree of control over lesser settlements, particularly to its south and west.

The surrounding population was no doubt drawn to Heybridge at particular times of the year to participate in celebrations and rituals that facilitated social cohesion and reinforced tribal or clan identity; hence the presence of the Late Iron Age shrines and their subsequent development into a large temple complex with ample open space for massed congregation. Possessing an important focus of social and religious significance, Heybridge may also have been recognised as a preferred place of burial, for the population of its hinterland as well as its resident occupants — particularly those of some status in Late Iron Age society, as indicated by the pyre sites, debris and their exotic funerary assemblages.

It is possible that Heybridge was also a recognised place of distribution — of both prestige goods and coins (itself a prestige item at this time?). Inevitably, as a place of congregation, and one in which a range of semi-specialist crafts were practised, it is very likely that the settlement also possessed a degree of market function. Here, farmers of the hinterland could acquire goods that were not in the repertoire of those subject to distribution that is presumed to have underpinned a social system of patronage/obligation. Although we have little knowledge of the nature of the relationship between the elite and the rest of Late Iron Age society, it is almost certain that in return for patronage and protection, tribute was exacted. This may have been principally in the form of agricultural surplus although service and manual labour are also very much suggested by the scale of the mid 1st-century settlement remodelling, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 5. It is possible that Heybridge acted as a collection, storage and redistribution point for agricultural surplus, and perhaps salt, accumulated as payment of tribute. It may also have had a function as a mustering place when the local population was required for 'public' works or even the raising of 'war bands'. Thus, in the local setting, Heybridge may be speculated to have had a close relationship with its surrounding settlements in terms of client/patron obligation between elements of their respective populations. Thus, a good portion of the agricultural surplus of the Heybridge *territorium* would potentially have made its way to Camulodunum and was accompanied by social obligation and political and 'military' service both of the local elite and of those under their control.

While the relationship with Camulodunum is of prime importance, that with Heybridge's nearest known neighbour of any size and importance, Kelvedon, is also vital to our understanding. It is evident from its (largely unpublished) ceramic assemblage that Kelvedon (later the Roman settlement of *Canonium*) possessed similarly early origins (Rodwell, K.A., 1988, 132). Located some 14km to the north of Heybridge and, (see above), possibly linked by road by the Roman period, these settlements were clearly contemporary with one another. It is anticipated that Kelvedon was a settlement of some status in its own right and perhaps serves to show that Heybridge's hinterland and sphere of influence could not have extended this far north. Indeed, Kelvedon's principal relationship may well have been with Camulodunum, only some 12km to its north-east. As the relationship between these settlements is unlikely to have been of an explicitly economic nature, it was perhaps one based on shared social and cultural activity. However, the presence of briquetage at Kelvedon, rather than being evidence of seasonal activity undertaken by elements of its own population (Rodwell, K.A., 1988, 81–2), is better interpreted as likely evidence of distribution or commercial trade in salt that may well have been controlled and channelled through Heybridge. This example serves as a warning that the identification of Late Iron Age settlement significance principally on perceived political, social or religious grounds may perhaps be misplaced and a result of our current ignorance of economic trade mechanisms and patterns.

Although lacking a detailed and wide-ranging understanding of early settlement morphology and function, Kelvedon may have been a lesser centre in its own right and possessed such 'service' functions as a cult or religious focus of Late Iron Age origin (Rodwell, K.A., 1988, 136). While this evidence is extremely slight, the consideration of Witham Ivy Chimneys in relation to Heybridge may be enlightening.

Like at Heybridge, the religious complex at Ivy Chimneys (Turner 1999) was a place of local, and perhaps wider, importance. As a further dimension of the social/cultural links between Heybridge and its neighbouring settlements (including Kelvedon and Camulodunum) it may be possible to suggest that an important factor was that of religious belief and practice. Shrines, temples and other forms of sacred places were apparently numerous across the Late Iron Age landscape, occupying larger settlements, as at Heybridge, and the countryside, as exemplified by a rural complex at Ivy Chimneys.

Religious foci of varying scale and importance, from wayside and village shrines to major cult centres at Heybridge and Camulodunum, may have been integral to the infrastructure of Trinovantian culture and identity. If so, it would be reasonable to assume that such sites were closely linked to one another. It is tempting to suggest that the 'Heybridge as a place of pilgrimage' scenario conjectured for the temple complex (Chapter 6) had its origins in a Late Iron Age tradition of closely connected religious places throughout Trinovantian territory and that these were visited on a regular, even highly structured, basis.

A model for the nature of the settlement hierarchy and inter-relationship for this area might be found in that proposed by Niblett and Bryant for Late Iron Age Verulamium and its surrounding settlements in Hertfordshire (1997). In essence, it is argued that while Verlamion was the principal political centre, other centres such as those at Baldock, Braughing, Cow Roast, Welwyn and Wheathampstead possessed their own particular specialist functions (*e.g.* religion and burial, manufacture, trade, *etc.*) and that all these places were interdependent and important in their own way. If accepted as a viable

model, this could provide an explanation for the location of the two major centres of Camulodunum and Heybridge in such close proximity to one another. Perhaps Kelvedon could be drawn into this too. Given the apparently close association between the Trinovantian and Catuvellaunian territories as expressed by both documentary and archaeological evidence, Bryant and Nibblet may well be correct in their recognition of a distinctive regional settlement pattern that extends across Essex, Hertfordshire and north Kent (1997, 280). Thus, there is potential for Late Iron Age Heybridge to be integrated into the regional view that reflects the social and political landscape of the time, as well as the physical.

Roman

The Roman conquest brought with it a very different set of influences that had greatest effect upon settlement distribution and hierarchy. The most important outcome of this was the emergence of other local centres (*i.e.* those often called 'small towns') throughout Trinovantian territory; those in the vicinity of Heybridge were Chelmsford (*Caesaromagus*), Kelvedon (*Canonium)*, Braintree and Wickford. However, the most significant development was that of Roman recognition of Camulodunum as the tribal capital and the establishment of the Colonia alongside (*Colonia Claudia Victricensis*). Clearly, the later 1st century AD was therefore a time in which Heybridge and its occupants had to renegotiate their relationship with surrounding settlements, many of which had found a new importance and were developing greater sets of functions within an emergent market economy.

Indeed, to discuss Heybridge's place in the settlement pattern and hierarchy is to highlight its fading fortunes in apparent contrast to those of the new 'towns'. As has been discussed in Chapter 4, in the Late Iron Age, Heybridge's function was primarily that of a secondary social and political centre. By the end of the 1st century AD, the absorption or diversion of Trinovantian power into that of the Roman administration of the province and the fostering of a market economy, that was very swiftly a prime and dynamic cultural force, had a marked effect upon the settlement.

Even though Heybridge was 10km from Kelvedon, 14km from Chelmsford, 16km from Wickford and 22km from Colchester (as the crow flies, although somewhat further in all cases by known Roman roads), and thus reasonably well placed in the overall distribution pattern, this was not enough. Instead of the Late Iron Age permeation of prestige goods along the east coast, continental trade was now more formalised and, at least initially, dictated by the movement and needs of the Roman army. Thus, the function of principal port and distribution centre appears to have been taken up by Colchester, via Fingringhoe. Without either military presence or port facility of any importance, Heybridge now occupied a rather peripheral location. As is immediately evident on consideration of its communication links with surrounding local centres (Fig. 8.2), Heybridge was not on a principal road route. Although it maintained its Late Iron Age routes to Colchester and Chelmsford, it was effectively bypassed by the direct route between the two (*i.e.* that of the modern A12).

Although Heybridge was evidently rather peripheral to the Roman settlement pattern, its function as a place of local commerce and religion, the latter possibly still of a regional importance, ensured its survival as a local centre rather than merely a subsistence-level agricultural settlement, such as a 'village'. It probably retained its function as a place of burial, as is attested by graves as late as the 4th century in its eastern cemetery area (Wickenden 1986, 64) and may have continued to provide a market for the local farming population. However, judging by the excavated evidence available to date, Heybridge's position within the Roman settlement hierarchy became increasingly dependant upon the continuing significance of the temple complex; probably as a place of both worship and local/regional cultural identity. It is conjectured that the pre-existing Late Iron Age connections between these sacred sites was perhaps rationalised in the Roman period, with the more significant foci being developed and possibly included on a formalised pilgrim route. If so, this would help explain the perpetuation of the settlement's direct road links with the other local centres and, in particular, with the Ivy Chimneys religious complex at Witham.

As has already been mentioned, Heybridge no doubt continued to service the local agricultural community resident in the surrounding landscape. With its connotations of ownership or jurisdiction over the land and its occupants, reference to the term 'hinterland' is carefully avoided here. Certainly a number of sites, particularly along the western fringes of modern Maldon, and often in the same places as the Late Iron Age sites, probably indicate a general continuity of farming settlements. However, it should be noted that the Late Iron Age/Romano-British transition was not one of continuity throughout the landscape. At Slough House Farm, a Roman double-ditched trackway cuts diagonally across the abandoned Late Iron Age system of enclosure and fields (Wallis and Waughman 1998, 41 and figs.33–4). Clearly, not all elements of the local landscape survived the conquest and, as the trackway may be speculated to head towards Heybridge, the growth in importance of the settlement may have brought about a number of changes, particularly in regard to routes of communication.

No villa sites have been positively identified in the immediate vicinity of Heybridge, and references in the Essex Historic Environment Record to possible villas all seem to be speculative, based largely on the presence of tile. As the varied uses of tile at Elms Farm demonstrate, no necessary correlation with architecture can be read into the presence of Roman tile, much less the identification of a villa. Across southern Britain as a whole, Gregson (1982) calculated the average distance from a villa to its closest town as *c.* 15km (and considerably further from the civitas capitals). With the major centres of Chelmsford and Colchester only 30km apart, it is likely that any patterning of villas would relate more closely to these rather than to Heybridge. However, it is interesting that there is a distinct 'ring' of identified villa sites around Heybridge at a distance of 9–12km to the north and west. Each is either 10–12km from Colchester or within 5km of Chelmsford, Kelvedon or Braintree (according to Going's map, 1996, fig.1). There are thus no identified villa sites in close proximity to Heybridge. This is in distinct contrast to the 'small towns' of Braintree and Kelvedon, which have a number of 'possible villas' close by.

A case has been made for 'small towns' operating outside, or parallel to, the established market economy

and its centres due to their marginal locations in the landscape and lack of buildings and facilities associated with Roman administration. This would seem to fit well with Heybridge and help explain the phenomenon of the distanced villas. However, the presence of high-status burials in lead and stone coffins (Wickenden 1986, 55–7), and lack of correspondingly high-status dwellings within the excavated area, suggest that a late Roman villa-style residence may indeed have been located in the vicinity, the location of which is as yet unknown.

Latest Roman and early Saxon
Compared to the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, knowledge and understanding of the *latest* Roman and early Saxon landscape context of the settlement is very poor. The location of rather dispersed Saxon occupation, largely around the fringes of the late Roman settlement, may suggest a corresponding fragmentation of the organised agricultural landscape beyond. In any case, the breakdown of both Romano-British settlement and agricultural management appears to have had its roots in the 4th century. Contrary to Drury and Wickenden (1982), who postulated a return to a rural-based society, there appears to have been no recognisable growth in the populations that occupied the surrounding farmsteads of the lower Blackwater valley from the late 4th to 5th centuries. If such a proposition was to be maintained, then the Romano-British population would presumably have to be seen as being displaced from the area entirely.

However, known early Saxon occupation sites in the vicinity are scarce, so that it is extremely difficult to gain an overview of landscape changes from the late 4th to 5th centuries and to determine whether the nature of change at Heybridge was similar to elsewhere. There are no such sites in close proximity, the accepted start date for Saxon occupation on the hilltop at Maldon being the beginning of the 10th century (Bedwin 1992, 18 and 20), although 7th- to 8th-century pottery has been found opposite St Mary's Church down by the Hythe (EHER 46749). The only 5th-century sites (Tyler 1996) so far identified in the general proximity of Heybridge are at Hill Farm, Tolleshunt D'Arcy (Adkins 1984), Kelvedon (Rodwell, K.A., 1988), Rivenhall (Rodwell and Rodwell 1985) and Broomfield (Gee 1986). Sixth- and 7th-century occupation activity has been found to the north of the Blackwater and its estuary, but is still scattered in nature: Chigborough and Slough House Farms (Wallis and Waughman 1998), Rook Hall (Adkins 1989).

At Elms Farm, there is evidence of both abandonment and reuse of late Roman settlement features (Chapter 3). This is a reminder that it is quite likely that elements of the agricultural landscape could have endured into the 5th century too. As has been noted at Elms Farm, although ditches passed quickly out of use the boundaries that they defined were perpetuated by more durable markers such as hedges. Thus, it is not difficult to envisage dispersed early Saxon-period occupation adopting at least a semblance of the old Roman landscape; though it is doubtful that much of this would be archaeologically visible.

Post-abandonment land use
Comparison of the 1st- (1874) and 2nd-edition (1879) Ordnance Survey maps with the 1840 Tithe maps reveals little change other than those following the imposition of the railways and modern roads. Although the Tithe map is unfortunately damaged at the relevant point, the legible apportionment details record a precisely similar division into 'arable' and 'pasture' or 'grass' to that prevailing immediately prior to the excavations.

The 1815 Tithe map reveals one significant divergence from the later maps, in that several more field boundaries are indicated along the northern edge of the 1994 site (essentially across Area B). These defined allotment plots that belonged to the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's. Possible remnants of these boundaries were observed on the ground by Mark Atkinson in 1993, indicating that little disturbance could have taken place since they were allowed to revert to pasture in the early 19th century. Only one feature on an aerial photograph (Fig. 1.3) could be related to a boundary on the 1815 map. This was a ditch running roughly east–west through Area W, differing in alignment to those features identified as a probable Romano-British field system.

Although not recorded on any of the maps inspected, the extensive post-hole alignment (Structure 59) recognised across areas G, H and J (Fig. 2.9) almost certainly constitutes a fence that ran north–south between the two hedged ditch lines that subdivided the site. This would have effectively bisected the large field and perhaps facilitated the control of grazing livestock between one area of pasture to the other. Indeed, the position of a centrally located gateway may be postulated from the occurrence of an apparent dump of post-medieval roof tile in the vicinity of post-holes 6068 and 6092. It is perhaps no coincidence that one of the widest spacings, at *c.* 2m, occurred between these same features. Encountered within the topsoil during machine-stripping, only a cursory record was made of this spread of tile. However, it is speculated that this material was laid in order to consolidate the disturbed ground created by the passage of animals through the gateway.

Post-medieval land division was also recorded across the arable land of Area W. East–west ditch 25204 is of particular interest as it would appear to perpetuate the course of a Late Iron Age and Roman ditch. Although a seemingly unlikely occurrence, the modern recut excavated as segment 2855 contained 19th-century brick, glass and pottery. Aerial photography has revealed the recut ditch to extend eastward to join with the access track off Crescent Road.

To its south, another post-medieval ditch 25195 ran across the entire width of Area W. It apparently originally drained into the surviving watercourse ditch that, as has already been speculated, may perpetuate a far more ancient watercourse. Drainage seems to be the explanation for the remainder of more minor linear features. One such feature, 2893, included a brick-lined and domed sump of probable 19th-century construction.

At the north end of Area W post-holes defined both circular (Structure 60) and linear (Structure 61) arrangements. Clearly 20th century in date, they attest to minor modern activity along the northern boundary of the field.

Further, non-agricultural, landscape activity is attested by the presence of a brickearth quarry at the eastern extreme of the site (Area Q). Of likely 19th-century date, this was perhaps only one of a number of relatively minor quarries in the vicinity. A gravel quarry was encountered in the 1972 Crescent Road excavation (Wickenden 1986,

17 and 55), which would have been more or less adjacent to that at Elms Farm.

Post-5th-century activity across the settlement area and its immediate environs has been remarkably sparse. The lack of subsequent re-occupation in this location, until the encroachment of modern Heybridge from the end of the 19th century onwards, has clearly permitted the survival of much of the Late Iron Age and Roman settlement remains. The agricultural regime undertaken on this land until the modern day has remained static and is probably little different to that of the 1st to 4th centuries: arable cultivation on the upper terrace and pastoral on the lower. This seems to have been perpetuated under the lordship of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's — the manor of *Tidwoldituna* was a gift from King Athelstan. The Domesday Book (1086) records the estate affording pasture for 160 sheep and a survey of 1222 alludes to it containing 60 acres of marsh and 30 acres of meadow. An inventory of 1301 further mentions 'a building for making cheese from sheep'.

In more recent times, the main settlement area remained as pasture. Known locally as 'Stone Field' or 'Stony Field', it seems that an understanding of the unsuitable nature of the field for arable farming has been appreciated for some time. This name may perhaps have arisen during the cutting of the post-holes for bisecting fence-line Structure 59, when the compacted metalled surfaces of both road and occupation surfaces would certainly have been encountered. Perhaps for the same reason, attempts to cultivate the land for potatoes during World War II were seemingly abandoned in their infancy.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

In the aftermath of a very large excavation such as Elms Farm, it seems appropriate to review the successes and failures of the project in pursuit of its objectives (issues of actual project management aside). The various observations, recommendations and cautionary notes made in this critique are, naturally, primarily framed against the backdrop of settlement studies, in particular those of Roman date. These generally deal with a greater level of detail than that of regional and national research frameworks (*e.g.* Brown and Glazebrook 2000; James and Millett 2001) or of synthetic works that include a level of review and recommendation (*e.g.* Burnham and Wacher 1990). Although undertaken in far from ideal conditions, the 'rescue and research' approach that was adopted and evolved during the life of the project has produced results of some considerable importance. Understanding of the nature of Late Iron Age, Roman and, to a lesser extent, early Saxon occupation at Heybridge has been significantly advanced since the overview offered by Wickenden and Drury almost two decades previously (Wickenden 1986, 61–65).

Clearly, large-scale excavation is the only means by which a detailed insight into complex settlements can be gained. Preliminary geophysical investigation, while informative as to the broad extent, essence of infrastructure and relative density of remains, added little other than the fact that there were metalled roads and very many pits. The trial trenching, limited due to issues of access and resourcing, merely confirmed the presence of archaeology and the interpretation of magnetic anomalies as features. However, given the complexity of intercutting and presence of stratified deposits, it is difficult to see any amount of intrusive evaluation trenches producing significantly more coherent results unless verging on modest area excavations in their own right.

The settlement, as a complete entity, is almost unique — certainly within the region, if not Britain. However parallels can be cited for different elements of Heybridge's morphology and function: for example Hengistbury Head, Baldock, Chelmsford, Braintree and Silchester. It should also be noted that the list of comparable sites is not restricted to those of major settlements but extends to minor rural places of occupation and other activity. This surely indicates that the distinction between the 'town' and countryside is far more blurred than we may like to believe at times. Clearly, there are no simple, clear-cut or convenient sets of parameters that can be applied in the classification of settlement types; extensive and detailed investigation reveals that each settlement should be judged on its own merits and is a unique combination of elements that reflects a complex set of local, regional and sometimes wider dynamics. With this in mind, it is time to appraise the more crucial contributions of the project to our understanding of Late Iron Age and Roman lower order settlement — at least in southern Britain.

It is the belief of the authors that Heybridge is absolutely central and integral to the emergence and existence of what is recognised as Late Iron Age Trinovantian/Catuvellaunian society and polity that centred upon Essex and Hertfordshire. This conclusion is suggested by the presence of distinctive funerary activity related to the Aylesford- and Welwyn-type traditions, the arrival of pre-conquest imports in quantity and, most significantly, the creation of a ?planned 'proto-town'.

A number of misconceptions regarding the nature and function of Heybridge have been dispelled by the Elms Farm investigations, not least its identification as an international port during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods and that it had a Roman military function following the conquest. Wickenden speculated that the likely deployment of garrisons at key places following the Boudican revolt may have stimulated their development into civilian market towns (1996, 77), but this was not the case at Heybridge. In some instances, the transition to urban-style nucleated settlements was already happening by the AD 40s rather than as late as the 70s, so a non-military or Roman administrative impetus is plausible.

The initial prosperity of Heybridge lay in its importance as a place of social and, perhaps, political significance in the Late Iron Age. Very much a case of 'being in the right place at the right time', the settlement benefited from its east-coast location at a time when the Augustan empire was keen to extend its influence to Britain. Under the control or patronage of politically dominant figures such as Cunobelin, the settlement was at the forefront of concerted political overture from the Roman world at the turn of the 1st centuries BC/AD. Heybridge is therefore central to our understanding of the nature, impact and implication of the relationship between Britain and Rome at this time.

Beyond the settlement itself it is necessary to investigate extensive tracts of hinterland to define land use and recognise landscape change. Admittedly, the essence of this can be extracted from aerial photography and resultant cropmark plots. However, Area W at Elms Farm serves to show that Late Iron Age and Roman surrounding landscapes were not simply empty fields, but that some areas, particularly those just beyond the settlement, were often given to multi-purpose use. Hence, at Heybridge, the immediate hinterland is home to funerary and manufacturing activities as well as those of agriculture. Not easily discerned from aerial photographs, area excavation would seem to be the only means of elucidating the role of the hinterland 'in-fields'. That peripheral areas and boundary features themselves were invested with particular significance is a widely accepted idea, but one that is rarely tested on a concerted basis by the excavation of large transects through settlements that include core, peripheral and hinterland areas. Of suspected particular significance was the watercourse that ran through Area B and undoubtedly constituted an important boundary along the north side of the settlement. Regrettably, this was not extensively investigated and so its implications as a physical and symbolic barrier, water source, communication route and perhaps place of structured deposition cannot be satisfactorily assessed. In

hindsight, the most crucial issue should perhaps have been the location and type of crossing of the water course by Road 1 but, at the time, efforts were concentrated upon the elucidation of early Saxon occupation on its north bank.

The study of Heybridge suggests that the seeds of its demise may have been sown at the Roman conquest. Heybridge failed to retain or effectively renegotiate its functional status within the newly emerging settlement hierarchy. This may have been related to the loss of key political figures such as Cunobelin or simply to the changing nature of social and economic organisation brought about by Roman policy and gradual acculturation. While its traditional social and cultural importance (*e.g.* religious function) sustained a degree of status as late as the beginning of the 2nd century, its economic role was clearly minor and swiftly became largely that of agricultural subsistence.

Going's overview of Roman Essex reaching its apogee in the 2nd century and then experiencing a protracted decline (Going 1996, 104) would thus seem to be borne out by the Elms Farm evidence. Furthermore, Going identified the growth of *latifundia* and drain of resources to the continent as the major cause of this wider decline. While this cannot be confirmed as the cause at Elms Farm, it is apparent that significant agricultural, and perhaps social, change occurred in the mid to later 2nd century. This included a marked intensification of arable production and perhaps also of livestock; an impetus imposed by provincial government remains entirely possible, though the extent to which land surrounding the settlement may have been appropriated into managed estates is debatable in this instance.

It could be argued that there was no tangible Late Iron Age/early Roman transition in that much of the cultural change had already taken place in the late 1st century BC and early 1st AD. On the basis of the Elms Farm evidence, the conquest itself had little immediate or emphatic impact on indigenous life outside places of military importance. The economic and social changes of the later 2nd century seem to have been as significant as the conquest, if not more so. Some of these changes were perhaps specific to Heybridge and its locality (*e.g.* temple reorganisation, change in settlement economy, contraction and decline), while others were of regional or even country-wide importance (*e.g.* change and intensification in agricultural practice; adoption of inhumation as the principal burial rite).

What is evident is that the Roman-period settlement lacked an internal organisation or administration to develop the settlement into a recognisably Roman 'town'. Aspirations were short-lived and it seems highly likely that there was no decurial or magisterial class present to provide direction and impetus. The lack of civic display suggests that the settlement was perhaps very much an indigenous place, its persistence owing to a long-established social and cultural role.

Understanding of the transition from Roman to Saxon has not been particularly advanced by the Elms Farm project, although there was occupation of the settlement after the Roman period. The scattered nature of the early Saxon evidence, its ambiguous relationship with elements of the final Roman settlement, and the paucity of its material remains has made it difficult to interpret the final stages of occupation and land use at Heybridge. It has not proved possible to verify Wickenden and Drury's conclusion that the late remains at Crescent Road constitute settlement continuity (Wickenden 1986). Attempts to understand the association of late Roman and Saxon features and material such as pottery have been inconclusive, which may suggest a break in occupation of a generation or so.

A particular success of the project was the identification of the Late Iron Age pyre sites and debris dumps of Areas W and M. As already stated, it is surely the case that such structures and features were an aspect of other settlement sites and that their discovery depends upon their recognition as cremation sites rather than cremation burials. Indeed, our whole understanding of Iron Age and earlier Roman cremation practice is currently being revised in the light of the Elms Farm, Folly Lane and Stanway evidence. What seems crucial to this, is the appreciation that formal cremation burial, in all its forms, was most likely a minority rite of interment and that the majority of the population was disposed of in less archaeologically conspicuous ways. The identification of these alternative forms of disposal of the dead is the next big issue in the study of funerary practices.

It has been possible to speculate on the likely relationship of Heybridge to other settlements nearby and in the region, especially Camulodunum/Colchester, but also Chelmsford and Kelvedon. By inference from the model offered by Niblett and Bryant for comparable settlements in Hertfordshire and the north Chilterns (1997), the authors have speculated that Heybridge enjoyed something of a symbiotic relationship with its near-neighbour Camulodunum and that each, and perhaps other places, possessed certain exclusive(?) but complimentary functions. Heybridge may have had a religious and funerary role that ran parallel to Camulodunum's primary importance as a political centre.

As a declining Roman-period settlement, Heybridge is less easily placed within a local and regional order, particularly as a pattern of inter-relationship and hierarchy for Essex has not been significantly advanced since Rodwell's discussion of Trinovantian 'towns' (1975). This may, in part, be due to difficulty in either relying upon or revising the status and function of other settlements — some interpretations are rather old and have not been advanced by recent excavation or else have simply not been fully published. Past interpretations must be taken at face value (*e.g.* settlements deemed to be 'small towns') and it has not been possible to reassess these in any detail as part of the Elms Farm Project. However, it is hoped that the results of this investigation will stimulate both re-interpretation of other settlements and their integration into a considered scheme of settlement inter-relationship and hierarchy. A more comprehensive model of settlement inter-relationship needs to be advanced for Late Iron Age Essex, particularly in view of the large amount of excavated data for this period that derives from occupation and burial sites.

As a project undertaken to record the *general* character of a large part of a major Late Iron Age and Roman settlement, the Elms Farm excavations have enjoyed a good degree of success. However, to what extent we can afford to allow the destruction of such resources is a matter of debate. Commitment to large-scale projects needs to be greater (*i.e.* better resourced) and not carried out under restrictive conditions of excavation in response to threat of development. Research-led projects, undertaken over a

number of years and regularly punctuated by periods of assessment and analysis to allow appreciation of results, adaptation of strategy and evolution of agendas and objectives, are a necessity. Lastly, a site-meets-landscape level of study seems preferable to either a small settlement-specific excavation or a wide-ranging but ultimately disparate investigation of a large landscape area.

Last, though certainly not least, the Elms Farm excavation recovered a large and important assemblage and the creation of related data sets represents a very considerable resource of comparative data. Exploitation and interpretation of this resource has not been exhaustive and it remains a rich area for future research, both on a site-specific and comparative/synthetic basis.

Appendix: Heybridge, a Late Iron Age and Roman Settlement: Excavations at Elms Farm 1993–5 Volume 2

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