

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROMAN ROAD AT BROCKLEY HILL, MIDDLESEX

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SUMMARY

The following report deals with a two week archaeological evaluation and subsequent watching brief carried out by the Museum of London Archaeology Service on the site of the former Wimpey Sports Grounds, Brockley Hill, Stanmore, London Borough of Harrow.

Fourteen archaeological evaluation trenches were investigated in order to determine if archaeological evidence survived for a Roman road, Watling Street, and any associated Roman roadside settlement or pottery kilns as have been located to the north of the site in the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (Sulloniaca).

The earliest deposit was the naturally occurring London Clay. In six of the evaluation trenches adjacent to the modern road a Roman road with a ditch on the west side was found directly below the topsoil. Limited investigation showed that the road had been constructed on a bank of clay and gravel layers, and had undergone periodic maintenance as indicated by a number of successive road gravels and recutting of the ditch when it had silted up. Dating evidence confirmed the road was in use into the 4th century AD. Early Roman pottery was of the type produced at Brockley Hill and the Roman ceramic building material was of fabric types produced in kilns found alongside Roman Watling Street. The most significant find was a Roman folding knife.

INTRODUCTION

In February 1995 the Museum of London Archaeology Service investigated and recorded 14 archaeological evaluation trenches (Bowsher 1995) on the site of the former Wimpey Sports Ground, Brockley Hill, Stanmore, London

Borough of Harrow (Ordnance Survey reference TQ 1786 9343). The site is located on the west side of Brockley Hill (A5), its southern boundary opposite the junction with Pipers Green Lane (Fig 1). The site is approximately 450m north-south and 250m east-west, over 9.5 hectares in total area, and lies on the southern slope of Brockley Hill.

The archaeological evaluation was carried out

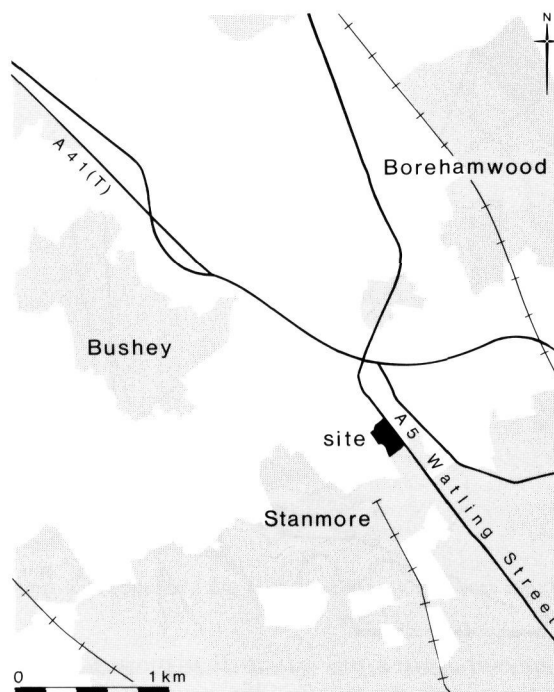


Fig 1. Location map of the site

to assess the potential archaeological remains in light of plans to develop the site into a golf course. The main research objectives for the evaluation were to locate a Roman road (Watling Street, Fig 2), thought to be on the east side of the site, and any evidence of Roman roadside occupation or pottery kilns as have been found to the north of the site in the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of *Sulloniacae* Fig 3.

The evaluation produced positive results for the line of the Roman road and flanking ditches in places only 0.30m below the present ground level. It recommended either preservation by record, requiring full archaeological excavation, or preservation *in situ*. Given the scope of the groundworks a mitigation strategy was agreed which delineated the line of the Roman road and a 10m wide band to the west to be protected by raising the ground level and avoiding large-scale ground works in this area. Some limited ground reduction was necessary within this zone and was the subject of an archaeological watching brief in August 1995 (Barber 1995). As part of the planning condition the results of the archaeological fieldwork were to be published.

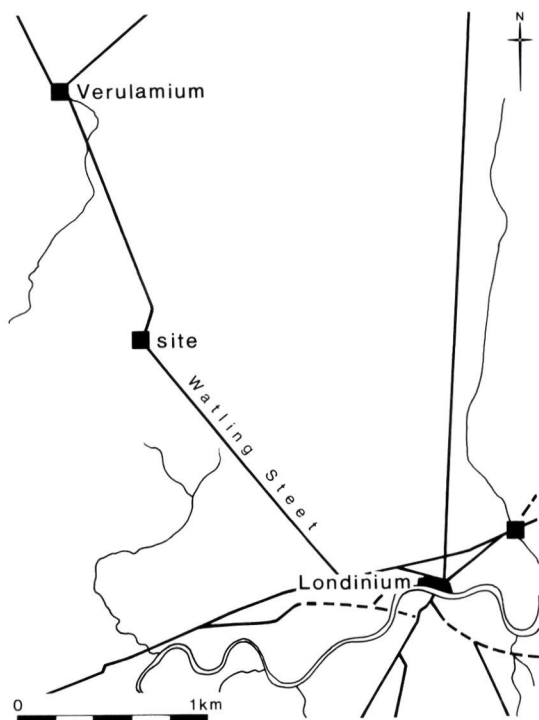


Fig 2. Location map of the site in relation to the Roman settlements at London (Londinium) and St Albans (Verulamium)

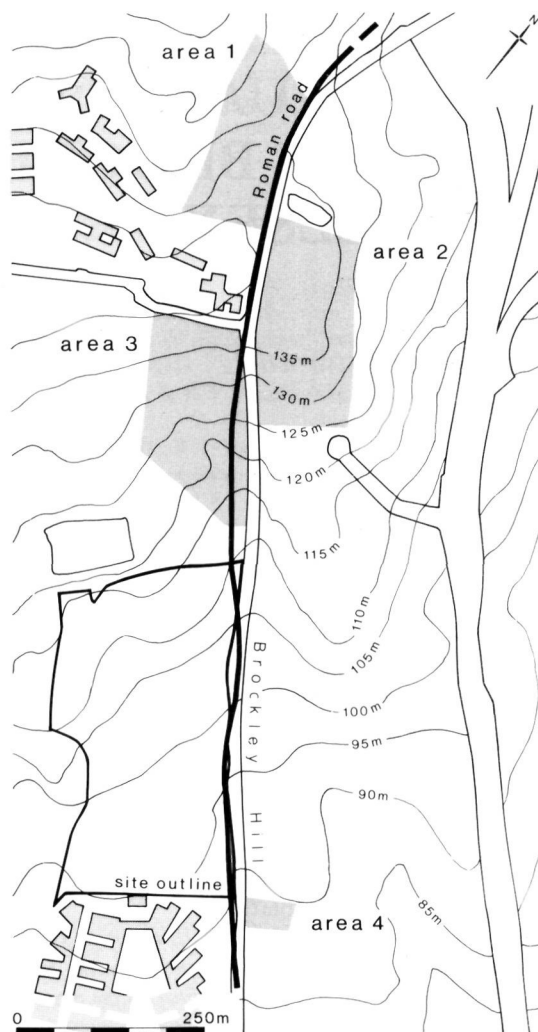


Fig 3. Plan showing the site, the four main areas of excavation (1937-1977) and the conjectured line of the Roman road (Watling Street)

GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies on the southern slope of Brockley Hill which rises from 65m OD at Canon's Corner to 150m OD at the top of Brockley Hill. From the southern boundary the site rises progressively to the north from 90m OD to 115m OD, a break of slope occurs north of Trench 13 where the incline becomes a lot steeper (Fig 4). A majority of the southern half of the site has been terraced to form a flat area for the Wimpey sports ground playing fields and tennis courts.

On the northern half of the site, as well as the steep north-south slope there is a small valley



Fig 4. Plan showing the location of the archaeological evaluation trenches with conjectured line of the Roman road (Watling Street)

running approximately northwest-southeast across the centre of the site. The land also declines to the east, adjacent to the modern road.

The eastern half of the site lies on London Clay; on the west side of the site the London Clay is overlain by Claygate Beds. At the top of

Brockley Hill to the north west of the site the Claygate Beds are capped by a glacial pebble deposit. London Clay was the earliest deposit encountered in all the archaeological evaluation trenches and its surface topography was similar to the present topography of the site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Following English Heritage guidelines the evaluation was generally non-intrusive and so a complete archaeological sequence of the road was not recovered from any trench. In most trenches archaeological investigation ceased as soon as any road deposits were encountered or the small size of the watching brief pits (Fig 5) were too small to allow full understanding of the archaeological deposits. In two trenches, 7 and 10, small slots were excavated to allow an examination of the archaeological deposits whilst limiting the amount of disturbance. A full understanding of the foundation and development

of road is therefore not possible due to the constraints of the archaeological evaluation; these constraints and the limited dating evidence do not allow the phasing or equating of the various elements of the road and associated ditches found in different trenches. The best archaeological sequence was seen in a slot dug at the west end of Trench 10. The basic sequence was a series of gravel and clay layers cut to the west by a north-south ditch. Overlying the east lip of the ditch was an extensive metallated surface. The road and the ditch were sealed by extensive dumps or accumulations of clay silt.

The main elements of the road are described below, from south to north.

The road and its construction

In Trench 9 a series of compacted gravels covered the eastern two thirds of the trench, the top of these gravels was at 90.50m OD. All these deposits sloped gently downwards from west to east and are assumed to be the eroded top of the road. A hollow in these gravels had filled with a sandy silt deposit which contained Roman pottery (AD 50–400). The eastern most compacted gravel contained Roman pottery (AD 50–160).

In Trench 10, in the excavated slot (Fig 6b), the earliest deposit was a compact gravel layer which was either an early road surface/gravel or part of the construction of the bank upon which the road was built. This was overlain by a clay dump which appeared to be a make-up for the overlying road gravels. No dating evidence was found from these deposits but they were cut by the earliest adjacent roadside ditch.

Above these layers and to the east of the ditch was a sequence of gravel layers. Overlying the clay dump was a highly compacted clean gravel layer overlain by a road surface. The lower gravel deposit was possibly a road but its 'clean' appearance suggests it is the foundation for the overlying road surface. The road surface consisted of small pebbles and 50mm beneath the surface it was highly compacted, the surface having suffered some erosion. It contained some Roman pottery (AD 50–400) and ceramic building material. The road surface was 9.40m wide (east-west), and its highest point was at 92.74m OD. The top of the road surface sloped downwards at its western edge reflecting the original camber of the road. The west edge of the road overlay the lip of the latest ditch; presumably some of

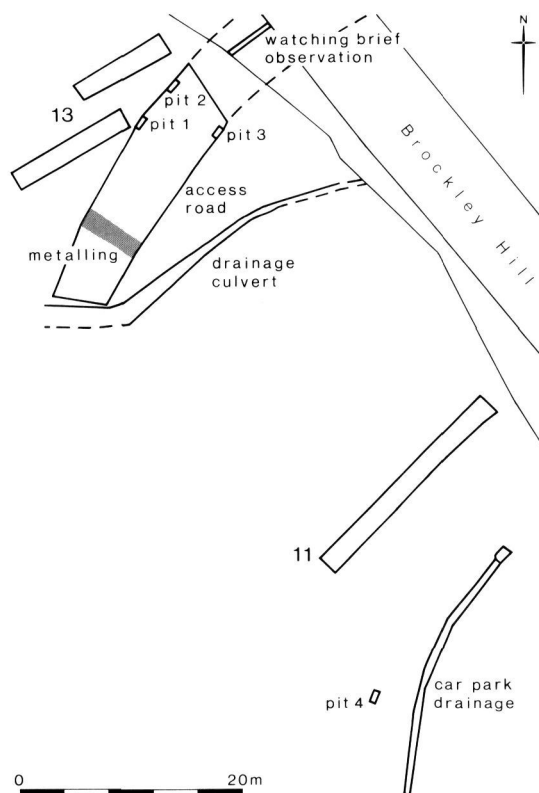


Fig 5. Plan showing the location of the archaeological watching brief work

this material had eroded off the top of the road. To the east the road lensed out and it was unclear whether this was the original edge of the road or it had extended farther to the east and subsequently eroded away.

Underlying the road and beyond the east edge were a series of layers of gravel and silty clay with Roman pottery (AD 50–160) tipping down to the east. As they were not excavated it was unclear whether these deposits were part of the construction of the road bank, or earlier road and road make-up deposits.

A similar sequence of deposits was seen in Trench 11 to the north (Fig 6a). At the east end of Trench 11 the top of the deposits sloped downwards sharply to the east. The earliest recorded deposit was a fairly compacted pebble layer, thought not to be a surface but a dump related to the construction of the road bank and contained 1st to mid 2nd-century tile. The lowest point of the deposit was at 93.95m OD. Overlying this was a layer of clay and pebbles with a similar profile and also thought to be part of the road bank construction. A modern sewer pipe trench ran across the site and was partially removed. In the sections revealed in the sides of this trench was a clay dump overlain by a well compacted gravel layer, similar in composition and colour to a road gravel/surface seen in Trench 10 to the south which also overlay a similar clay dump. The top of the road gravel was at 95.10m OD.

Overlying the road gravel/surface and the bank construction deposits to the east was an extensive deposit of clay silt which appeared to be a make-up dump for a later road gravel/surface. This road surface was composed of small flint pebbles and included some small fragments of Roman ceramic building material and a Roman coin, which was worn, and dated from 1st to 3rd century AD. The road surface survived to 4.00m wide (east-west) and sloped down from west to east. It has probably been eroded and was probably originally wider.

In the drainage culvert north of Trench 11 the natural London Clay appeared to have been truncated and was overlain by a series of thin compacted gravels, 0.50m thick and assumed to be part of the road. In watching brief Pits 1, 2 and 3 (Fig 5) the road was evident by a number of thin layers, 0.10m thick of compacted clay and pebbles. Limited ground reduction in the area for the new access road did not disturb archaeological deposits although a small area of loose pebble and cobble is interpreted as the

eroded surface of the Roman road. The surface of the uppermost surviving road gravel in this area was between 96.36 to 97.00m OD, the difference probably due to the camber of the road.

In Trench 13 a series of bands of gravel of varying compaction and gravel and clay deposits were encountered over both parts of the trench. Some of these contained Roman ceramic building material and Roman pottery (AD 50–400). As with Trench 9 it was unclear whether these were remnants of an actual road surface or dumps related to the construction of the road.

In Trench 14, to the east of the roadside ditch, a number of gravel deposits formed a possible road surface at 98.90m OD, sloping gently downwards to the east. Underlying this gravel, to the east, a number of gravel and clay dumps (seen in plan only) may relate to the construction of the road bank.

North of Trench 14 the road must lie to the east of Trenches 2 to 7.

The road was constructed on a bank of clay and gravel layers: in places this survived to over 1.25m thick (Trench 11). Its slope mirrors the present slope of the land, rising from 90.50m OD in Trench 9 to 98.90m OD in Trench 14. There is evidence that it was resurfaced a number of times. There is no dating evidence for the foundation of the road although the road bank does contain pottery of AD 50–160. Pottery from the road gravels dates from AD 50–400 and a coin, datable only to the 1st to 3rd century AD, was found on one of the latest surviving road surfaces.

The western roadside ditch

In Trench 9 the presence of the ditch can be deduced from the edge of the road gravels and on the expected line of the ditch was a clay silt deposit similar to that found sealing the ditch in Trench 10.

The best evidence for the western roadside ditch was from Trench 10 (Fig 6b). The earliest form of the ditch was a north-south cut, 1.60m wide and at least 0.80m deep. The west side of this ditch had slumped and the east side had silted up. It was recut by a slightly narrower ditch, 1.40m wide. This ditch silted up with a series of interleaving silty clays and gravel bands, presumably material eroded from the road to the east. These ditch fills included Roman pottery (AD 50–400), ceramic building material and some

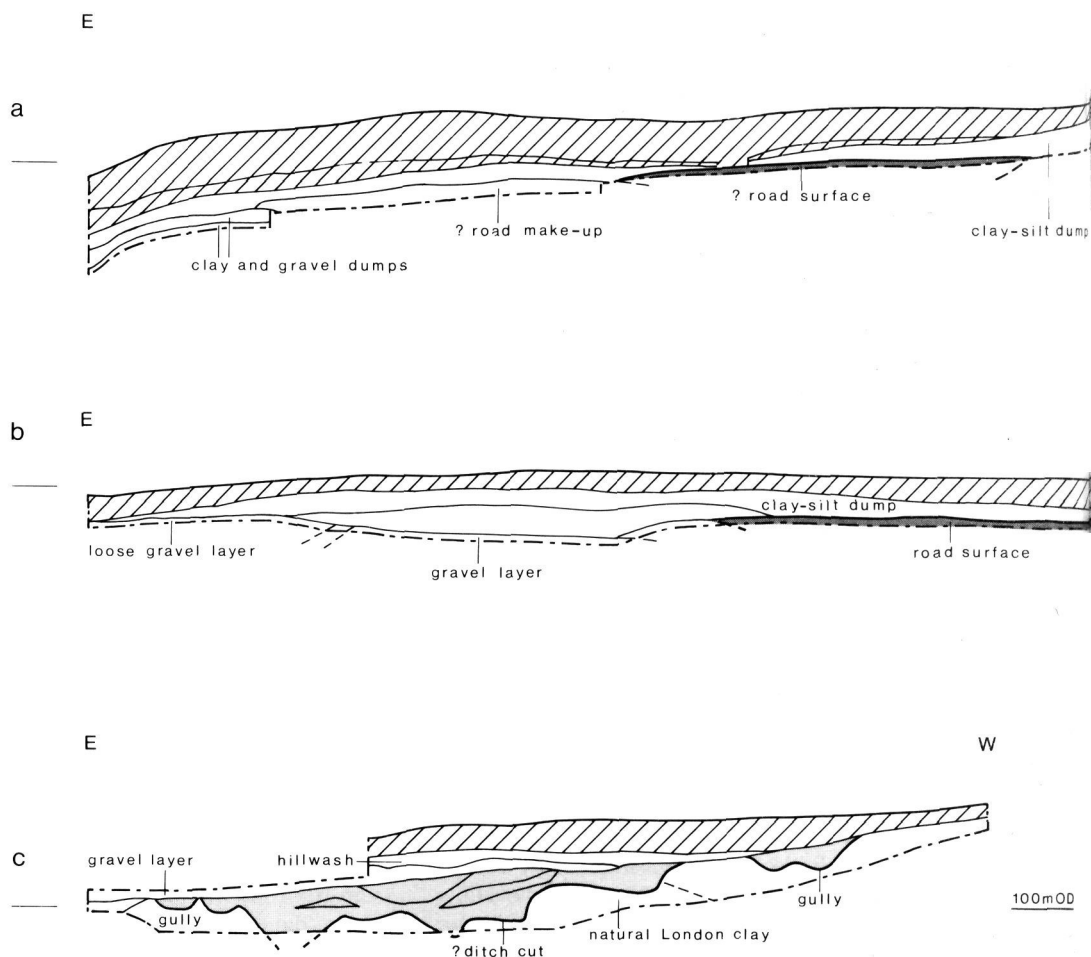


Fig 6. a) North facing section of Trench 11; b) North facing section of Trench 10; c) North facing section of Trench 7

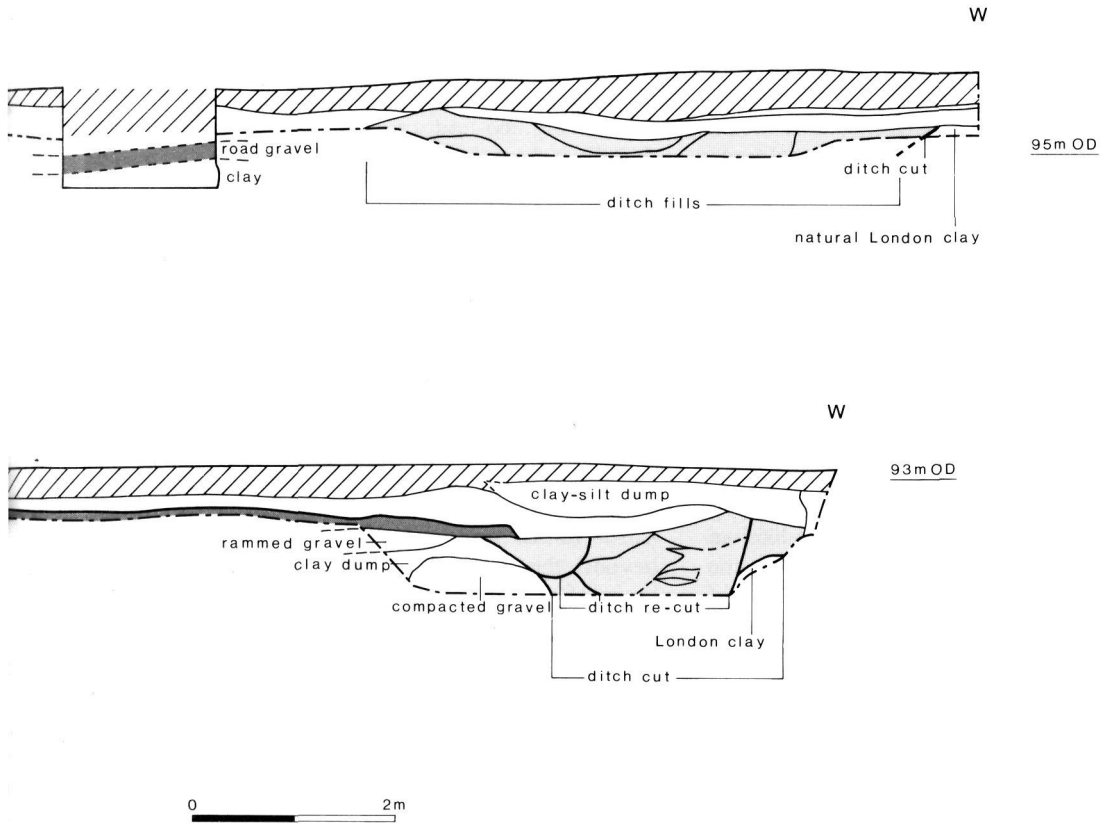
metal slag. In turn this ditch having silted up was also recut, this time by a much smaller north-south ditch only 0.85m wide. The recut ditch was filled by a sandy silt clay with a high charcoal content and some Roman ceramic building material and pottery (AD 250–400). This complicated ditch sequence illustrates that the ditch was probably constantly silting up and being maintained by being recut.

A north-south linear cut in watching brief Pit 4 was suggested by a number of silty clay layers with pebbles filling a cut feature whose edges were beyond the limits of Pit 4, and which could be ditch fills of a western roadside ditch. However it is too far west to be the ditch seen in Trench 10; either the ditch was considerably wider at this point or it is a separate feature.

In Trench 11 (Fig 6a) the top of the western roadside ditch was 5.00m wide. The upper fills

of clay and sandy gravel were seen to tip towards the centre of the ditch. Apart from these upper fills the ditch was not excavated. The line of the roadside ditch evident in Trenches 9, 10 and 11 to the south and Trenches 14 and 7 to the north was expected to be present in the west end of Trench 13. The absence of evidence for the ditch was either due to a change in line of the ditch or the fact that it was sealed by the gravel dumps thought to relate to the road or road construction which were not excavated.

In Trench 14 the profile of the roadside ditch had changed from that seen in Trench 10 to a shallower cut at least 5.00m wide. Within the ditch two homogeneous waterlaid deposits had accumulated containing small amounts of Roman ceramic building material. This ditch marks an increase in the steepness of the north-south slope up which the road was constructed, and with



evidence from Trench 7 to the north, the construction of the road and road drainage may have altered on the steeper slope.

In Trench 7 after removal of the topsoil an extensive gravel deposit was encountered and appeared to be filling a north-south linear feature. The trench was extended to the north in order to record a profile across the feature (Fig 6c). Natural London Clay falls to the east by 0.80m into which a number of linear features or ditches, orientated north-south, were cut. The most westerly was a shallow gully filled with a pebble-rich deposit with charcoal flecks and Roman ceramic building material and pottery (AD 50–160). Immediately to the east was a complex linear cut again orientated north-south. A majority of the cut was filled with similar material with gravel tipping down the sides of the cut, presumably eroded from the road. This fill included Roman pottery

(AD 250–400), ceramic building material, and charcoal flecks and represents either silting up or material washing into the cut. Within the ditch fill, lenses with large amounts of charcoal, some Roman pottery (AD 250–400) and ceramic building material fragments, may indicate refuse dumps. A hollow in the top of the fill was filled by gravel. Further east of this cut was another shallow gully orientated north-south and filled with gravel and silty clay.

Sealing the ditches was an extensive loose gravel layer with frequent inclusions of Roman ceramic building material, Roman pottery (AD 270–400), some scraps of lead waste and a fragment of millstone. Whether this layer was deliberately deposited in order to consolidate the ground above the ditches or has naturally washed in, perhaps eroding down off the road to the north is unclear.

The ditches recorded in this trench must lie on the west side of the Roman road although they are dissimilar in form to the roadside ditch seen in Trench 10 to the south. However, in Trench 10 the ground is relatively flat whereas Trench 7 lies on both a north-south and east-west slope. The ditches recorded in Trench 7 are perhaps cut into the base of Roman terracing.

North of Trench 7 the line of the western roadside ditch appears to be to the east of the evaluation trenches. At the east end of Trench 6 the top of the London Clay was markedly sloping downwards to the east and may be the western edge of the ditch. In Trench 6 a shallow, 0.15m deep, linear cut orientated north-south contained some Roman pottery (AD 270–400) and ceramic building material. The function of the cut is unclear and it may be natural erosion of the top of the London Clay into which some Roman material has accumulated, or it may be the continuation of the westernmost gully seen in Trench 7.

Immediately above the natural London Clay in Trench 5, which slopes down from west to east, was a layer of sandy silt with some Roman pottery (AD 50–160) and ceramic building material. At the base of this layer was a band of rounded flint pebbles; it is possible that the London Clay had been truncated as part of a terrace cut on this east-west slope to form the level platform of the road.

The trenches to the north and adjacent to the east side of the site (Trenches 2, 3, and 4) revealed no evidence of a ditch and are positive evidence of the absence of the ditch, hence the road must have continued to the west of these trenches.

Dating evidence from the western roadside ditch shows it must have remained open until at least the late 3rd century AD. North of Trench 13 the increased north-south slope and the addition of an east-west slope seems to have altered the construction of the road. It is likely that in order to provide a level platform for the road a terrace was cut into the London Clay, removing material from the east side and dumping it to the west. Also the road on this slope would require increased drainage or protection to avoid being washed away by surface water running down the slope(s), particularly on the very poorly draining London Clay. This may be represented by the additional gully seen in Trenches 6 and 7 and by the more complex nature of the ditch also in Trench 7.

The eastern roadside ditch

The eastern roadside ditch is less obvious than the western. Deposits recorded at the east end of Trenches 9, 10 and 11 may indicate the line of the ditch but they could equally relate to the construction of a bank upon which the road was constructed and the ditch lies beyond this bank, that is, beyond the limits of the trenches.

In Trench 10 the camber at the east side of the upper road surface coincided with a depression in the underlying gravel layers into which a slightly sandy clay had accumulated and, although not excavated, may indicate the presence of the eastern ditch.

In Trench 11, to the east of the upper road surface, deposits thought to relate to the construction of the road sloped sharply downwards to the east. The eastern ditch would lie beyond the road bank and hence beyond the limits of the trench.

The same shallow north-south gully was recorded in watching brief Pits 2 and 3 sealed by road gravels; if this is the remnant of a roadside ditch, the road has shifted to the east. In Pit 1 layers beneath the road gravels tipped to the east, this may be the edge of a linear feature following the profile of the road bank.

Beyond Trench 13 there was no evidence of the eastern roadside ditch as it would lie to the east of all the subsequent trenches. A series of linear earthworks in the strip of woodland in the north east corner of the site may indicate the presence of such a ditch.

Trenches off the line of the Roman road (Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 12) contained no evidence of Roman occupation.

Post-road deposits

In a number of Trenches (7, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14) a layer of clay silt had accumulated over the road and ditch deposits. This is interpreted as hillwash as it was not seen in the northern trenches on the upper part of the slope. In Trench 7 the hillwash had accumulated in the hollow left by the cutting of the ditches and contained a large amount of Roman ceramic building material, an unworn but broken Roman coin of AD 268–93, pottery (AD 250–400) and a Roman folding knife (Figs 7, 8). In Trench 10 and 11 a clay silt layer sealed the road and ditch: it is possible that it represents a deliberate dump

for a later road that has subsequently eroded or accumulated once the road had gone out of use. In Trench 10 it contained both Roman pottery (AD 300–400) and ceramic building material. This deposit was thickest over the line of the western road ditch.

The date of this material is uncertain, though it post-dates the use of the road and contains only Roman material. A layer of topsoil covered all the trenches and included both small amounts of Roman material (AD 50–400) and post-medieval material (1600–1900).

Some of the archaeological investigations produced no evidence. Trench 8 was located over a gas main and the car park drainage followed an earlier pipe trench that had removed all archaeological deposits. The trial trench in the area linking the new access road to the present road showed that the construction of this road had removed any potential archaeological deposits.

DISCUSSION

Archaeological background

The site lies adjacent to, or on the line of, a Roman road known as Watling Street. Watling Street connects London (*Londinium*) in the south to St Albans (*Verulamium*) to the north (Fig 2). Watling Street follows the line of the Edgware Road towards London. At Marble Arch a spur road runs along the route of Oxford Street–Holborn and enters the City at Newgate (Margary 1955, 48). The exact line of Watling Street in the Brockley Hill area has yet to be definitely established or understood. Much archaeological work has been undertaken, mainly to the north of the site, to establish the line of the road and can be divided into four areas (Fig 3) (Seeley and Thorogood 1994, 224).

Excavations at Canon's Park roundabout (Suggett 1953, 276) recorded gravel metalling with a ditch on the east side under the modern road. However, earlier observations beneath the present A5 road (O'Neil 1942, 220) north of Canon's park roundabout found no evidence of the Roman road. It was subsequently suggested that the line of the Roman road could be traced up Brockley Hill on the east side of the present road (O'Neil 1951, 137–39). Excavations in Area

2 revealed no trace of the road on this line and in Area 4 observations of a trench indicated the road was probably post-medieval in date (Castle 1972, 152). Further work on this road line was inconclusive but dated a road as post-medieval (Braithwaite 1987, 4).

Evidence from excavations in Area 1 (Suggett 1953; 1954) and Area 3 (Castle 1972; 1973) appears to indicate that the Roman road lay on the west side of the present road. Various ditches, banks and metalled surfaces have been recorded and the conjectured line of the road based on this evidence was plotted (Castle 1976, 207). In the field immediately north of the present site the road varied in width from 13 to 25ft (3.96m to 7.62m), increasing in width as it descended the hill. It was constructed on a clay bank (9in thick) with a layer of rammed gravel (6in thick) and flanking ditches on both sides. The ditches contained both 1st, 2nd and 4th-century artefacts. It was seen some 80ft (24.40m) north of the present site.

The situation is complicated by a hollow way running between this line of the Roman road and the present road. It is thought the hollow way was in use during the 18th century and used until the present road was established in 1827 (Castle 1976, 223). It appears that subsequent roads have moved as they ascend the steepest part of Brockley Hill and this has left a slight curve to the west in the present road as it ascends the hill, leaving the earliest, Roman road to the east.

To the north of the site, Brockley Hill has long been thought to be the site of the Roman settlement of *Sulloniacae* mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, being 12 miles from London and nine miles from St Albans. Archaeological investigations between 1937 and 1977 (Grew & Thorogood 1992) in the Brockley Hill area to the north of the site, in the vicinity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, discovered considerable amounts of Roman material. However, there was little evidence of the settlement of *Sulloniacae* but these archaeological investigations revealed an important Romano-British pottery industry site. At least 14 kilns and numerous pits, many of which were initially used as quarries for clay and then backfilled with wasters and kiln debris, were found (Seeley & Thorogood 1994, 224). Excavations on the east side of Brockley Hill at the junction of Pipers Green Lane discovered a group of Roman cremation burials (Suggett 1956).

The line of the road

The conjectured line of the road (Figs 3 and 4) in the southern half of the site confirms the previous attempt to conjecture the line (Castle 1976, 207). The evidence north of Trench 13 suggests the road deviates to the west. In order to link the road to the evidence from the north of the site and to avoid projecting the road across Trenches 3, 4, and 5 where the road was absent it must swing back to the east (Fig 3). The size of this deviation is unknown and has been conjectured to show the smallest bend to link the two projections.

THE FINDS

Angela Wardle

Seven of the accessioned finds are of Roman date, six are post-medieval and the remainder are of indeterminate date. Most objects are from the topsoil and of mixed date, but one coin <1> is from the Roman road surface in Trench 11. A small group of Roman objects, including a distinctive folding knife <3> came from hillwash in Trench 7 (Figs 7, 8). The only securely dated Roman coin is 3rd century (AD 286–93); two others can only be dated broadly to the 1st–3rd

century AD. An Elizabethan half groat highlights the mixed nature of the assemblage. The coin <20> was recovered from the topsoil and is an apparently unlisted type (Fig 9) (G Egan pers comm).

The Roman material attests a Roman presence in the area, but because of its generally abraded condition and provenance in later contexts, it adds little to the interpretation of the site. The condition of the Roman coins generally precludes precise dating and most are residual.

Despite the general poverty of the assemblage, one object is outstanding, both for its comparative rarity and its state of preservation. The folding knife <3> (Figs 7, 8) has a copper alloy frame and an iron blade. The back of the knife, which protects the folded blade and forms a handle when in use, is zoomorphic and apparently represents a dolphin, its curved tail at the blade end. The animal is attached to the straight-sided frame which has a slot to hold the well-preserved blade. The blade pivots at the squared end, the pivot clearly visible on a radiograph. An open-work section between the creature's tail and this end could act as a suspension loop. Length 69mm; width 18mm.

The object may have been used as a personal toilet instrument, perhaps the *cultellus tonsorius* 'barbers' small knife' or *onychisterion lepton* (Gk) a 'light nail trimmer' (Boon 1991), the ancient

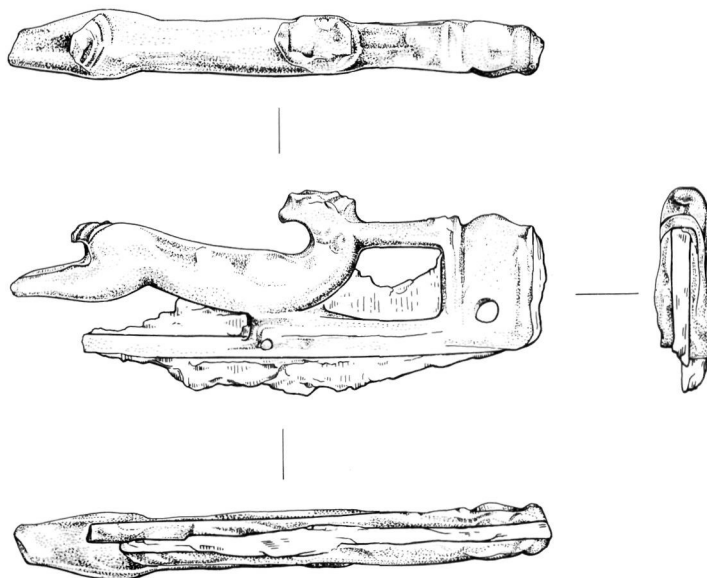


Fig 7. Roman folding knife



Fig 8. Roman folding knife (scale 2:1)

equivalent of nail scissors. Such knives or razors are often found with bone handles, frequently elaborately carved, but the iron blade rarely survives. A copper-alloy razor of very similar construction and size, was found at Thetford (Gregory 1991, 132, fig 117, no. 19). The handle has an identical squared terminal with a pivot for the iron blade, which is lost, and shows a dog seizing a hare, the openwork figures again attached to the straight edge of the frame, which is apparently slotted in the same way. The

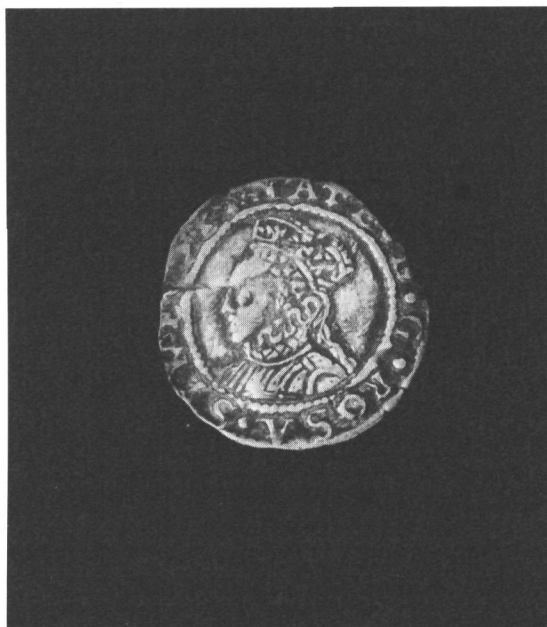


Fig 9. Elizabeth I half groat (scale 4:1)

Thetford knife was found in topsoil in the area of a late Roman structure and in association with late Roman coins; the type is likely to be late Roman, possibly 4th century.

The dolphin is a well known Roman decorative motif and can be seen, for example, on a folding

spoon from Colchester (Crummy 1983, 69), a related class of folding implement (Sherlock 1976).

The Roman pottery

Jo Groves

The majority of the pottery was very badly abraded and some burnt. Verulamium Region White ware (VRW) and possibly Verulamium Region Grey ware (VRG) are the only early Roman types identified in the assemblage. A high proportion of VRW is to be expected due to the close proximity of the Brockley Hill Roman pottery kilns. It is not possible to determine whether the material is kiln waste or rubbish from domestic use. None of the sherds show any characteristics of waster material although the small sherd and assemblage size is unfavourable to the identification of wasters. Some of the VRW sherds have sooting/burning which is consistent with cooking use. Samian is absent and there is only one definite sherd of an amphora in the assemblage, which is unusual for a London site and is perhaps an indication that the VRW sherds are not part of a typical assemblage.

The Roman ceramic building material

Jackie Keily

Most of the material consisted of small fragments, many of them soft and therefore also quite abraded. The majority of the material was of two fabric types (3006 and 2459A) that were produced at a kiln site at Brockley Hill and all dated from the 1st to mid 2nd centuries AD. The types of ceramic building tile found included brick, roofing tile (imbrex and tegula), combed flue tile and a few small fragments of daub.

CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological work recorded evidence for a Roman road (Watling Street) with a ditch on its west side. The projected line of the road is similar, *ie* on the west side of the present A5 road, to the line projected by Castle (1976, 207) based on previous archaeological work to the north of the present site. It appears there is a

bend in the road as it rises up the hill. A linear north-south earthwork in the strip of woodland in the north-west corner of the site may be a relic of the Roman road or its ditch.

The Roman road builders were faced with the problem of constructing the road up the steep north-south slope of Brockley Hill, and where it runs up the northern part of the site there is also an east-west slope. There would also have been the requirement to protect the road from erosion from surface water flowing down the hill.

From the limited evidence of the archaeological evaluation the road was flanked by a ditch on the west side and the gravel road metallings were constructed on a bank of clay and pebble layers. There is also some evidence for attempts at terracing the natural London Clay (in Trenches 14, 7 and 6) to create a flat base for the road.

Apart from selected areas, little actual excavation was possible and the full extent of the road width was not established, nor was the full depth of the road deposits. Where small deeper slots were excavated (*eg* Trench 10) there was evidence for a sequence of road gravels and recuts of the adjacent ditch, indicating that the road was maintained during the Roman period. The road surfaces examined are obviously only the latest surviving surfaces and likely to be the most eroded.

The limited dating evidence suggests the road bank was constructed in the 1st to mid 2nd century AD and was in use into the 4th century.

Although Roman pottery kilns and associated deposits have been found in the field immediately north of the site, no kilns were found in this evaluation. Nor were there any large assemblages of pottery wasters or kiln furniture. A majority of the early pottery from the site is of the type produced at the Brockley Hill kilns.

A reasonable amount of Roman metalwork including three coins and, of most interest, a folding knife was recovered. Small amounts of animal bone and metal slag were found in the Roman deposits and a fragment of millstone. The Roman ceramic building material all dated from the 1st to mid 2nd century AD and included brick, roofing tile and flue tile. Interestingly the majority was of a fabric type produced from tile kilns found alongside Roman Watling Street.

In Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, and 12 no archaeological features were revealed, although Roman material was recovered from the topsoil in all these trenches. Apart from the small amount of post-medieval material recovered from topsoil deposits

there was no evidence of any post-Roman development on the site until this century.

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All original field records, finds and archive reports are held at the Museum of London, under the site code BHL95, and available for consultation upon request.

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