

**In The Shadow of the Defences:
Leicester Square, Sanvey Gate,
Leicester. Excavations,
2004-2005**

SK 584 050



Volume 1: The Stratigraphic Report

By Wayne Jarvis with contributions from
Sophie Clarke

ULAS Report No. 2012-034

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

The development proposals by Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd on behalf of Metropolitan Housing Partnership consisted of the partial demolition and redevelopment of the former Richard Roberts site, Sanvey Gate, Leicester. This involved the conversion of two existing buildings into residential apartments (to be called Sanvey Mill and The Chimney Building), and also some modern buildings would be demolished as necessary to make way for a pair of new apartment blocks (The Annexe and Burgess House buildings). Together these four buildings formed the Leicester Square development. This report presents the results of archaeological fieldwork carried out as part of this development.

Location

The site is located on the south side of Sanvey Gate in Abbey Ward, and just west of St. Margaret's Way, in the north of the city of Leicester (national grid reference SK 584 050; see Fig. 1). The site is occupied by two large, late 19th- to early 20th-century mills, Mosan Mills on the Sanvey Gate frontage, and the Corella Works (also known as the Pedura Works) to the south. These two factories were surrounded by modern prefabricated factory buildings, the latter being demolished prior to redevelopment. These were all part of the Richard Roberts (Holdings) Ltd factory complex. The Leicester Square development consisted of two main areas: Area 1 fronts on to the east end of Sanvey Gate and St. Margaret's Way, being adjacent to the Mosan Mills building, to be refurbished as Sanvey Mill. Meanwhile Area 2 continues westwards along Sanvey Gate and south along the frontage of Burgess Street, being the land adjacent to the Corella Works (to be The Chimney Building). The total area of the site was c.10500 sq. m., with 28% of this area being available for excavation (Table 1).



Fig. 1 Location plans with project area highlighted.

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Table 1 Areas affected and examined on site

Area (Phase) Name	No. of Trenches	Trenched Area*	Total Area*	%age area of Area trenched
1	8	322	2590	12.5
2	9	585	4760	12.3
Mill bldngs retained by area:2080* (20%)				
Area for full excavation: 2850*, 28%				
Total site area: 10500*				

*Sq m.

Geology and topography

The geology of the site is known to consist of Mercia Mudstone (Keuper Marl) overlain by river terrace gravels (Colt and partners 1993). The site lies at an average height of 55.8m AOD, rising gently to the south and west, with a slight terrace on the line of the defences taking advantage of the natural slope of the ground.

Archaeological and historical background

The site lies within the Leicester City Archaeological Alert Area as defined in the Local Plan (Williams and Constable 2002) and fronts on to streets that are thought to have medieval, if not earlier, origins. The site lies within the north-east quarter of the historic core of the Roman and medieval walled town, an area of significant archaeological potential, and the line of Leicester's defences actually crosses the development area (JSAC 2003; Fig. 2, Fig. 3). In addition to the defences (c.3200 sq. m), the site incorporates a small area of suburban or extra-mural land (c.120 sq. m.; north-west corner of Area 2), and a large area actually within the town walls (c.1400 sq. m; *insulae* V and VI in the Roman town). The desk-based archaeological assessments recorded a significant number of other Roman and medieval remains within the immediate vicinity of the site, including suburban occupation outside the defences, and urban activity associated with the historic town (Williams and Constable 2002, JSAC 2003). The Corella Works (to be known as The Chimney Building) is on the Listed Buildings Register at Grade II. Although the area was considered to have high archaeological potential, very little previous fieldwork had been carried out actually within the site area, and work that had been done proved negative (R. Clark pers. comm.). Archaeological evidence for the environs of the site can be summarised as follows (Buckley 2002, JSAC 2003, Higgins et al. 2009):

Roman

Fig. 2, Fig. 3

Following the Roman conquest of Britain, the earliest Roman settlement in Leicester was established on the east bank of the river Soar, close to a possible Roman fortlet and over the existing native settlement of *Ratae*. The timber structures of this early settlement are on a slightly different alignment to the grid laid out in the early 2nd century (Clay and Mellor 1985). Subsequently, Leicester was probably constituted as a *Civitas* capital in about 100-120 AD, at which time the street grid is thought to have been laid out with the effect that building alignments changed. The buildings of the early town seem to have been predominantly of timber. In the mid-2nd-century AD, public buildings – the forum and baths – were constructed in the centre of the town, followed by a circuit of earth and timber town defences built probably late in the 2nd century. A wall was added to the front of the rampart most likely in the 3rd century, and at about the same time a market hall or *macellum* was constructed north of the forum.

Evidence revealed so far is admittedly limited, but appears to suggest essentially domestic and commercial occupation to the east of the main focus of public buildings of Roman Leicester. Within *insula XI* south-west of the current site, the Causeway Lane site of 1991 (Connor & Buckley 1999) revealed a long sequence of superimposed yard surfaces with timber buildings dating from the 1st-4th centuries. Recent excavations west of this in the northern portion of the St. Margaret's Baths site (Gnanaratnam, 2009) revealed limited evidence for Roman structures in the form of robber trenches, together with street metallurgy. Although this site had been heavily truncated by medieval and later activity, the lack of large quantities of residual Roman material gave the impression that Roman occupation on this site had never been particularly intensive. Roman levels had been entirely destroyed, save for a possible robbed cellar and ditch cutting the natural gravel, on the St. Peters Lane site of 1988-9 in *insula XVIII*, whilst to the south, the Little Lane site revealed a sequence of timber and masonry buildings in *insulae XXIV* and *XXV* (Lucas & Buckley, 1989). Only limited evidence for Roman activity has been recorded in *insula XVII*, principally from the Freeschool Lane excavation (Coward and Speed

2009), lending some weight to the suggestion that this area was not particularly densely occupied in the Roman period. However excavations just to the west of the current site have identified a series of substantial stone buildings in *insula* V, with occupation spanning the Roman period (Higgins *et al.* 2009).

Many Roman mosaics and tessellated pavements have been recorded in the vicinity, including the possible location of the Cyparissus Pavement, the Vine Street mosaic (Johnson 1979-80) and those recorded on Blue Boar Lane (Wacher 1974). Painted wall plaster and masonry walls indicating the location of high status Roman townhouses have also been recorded in several locations close to the development area, including the Blue Boar Lane townhouse (Wacher 1974) with its finely decorated wall plaster. Many other Roman structures have been indicated within and very close to the area, by the discovery of the remains of walls, post-holes, tessellated pavements and mortar floors.

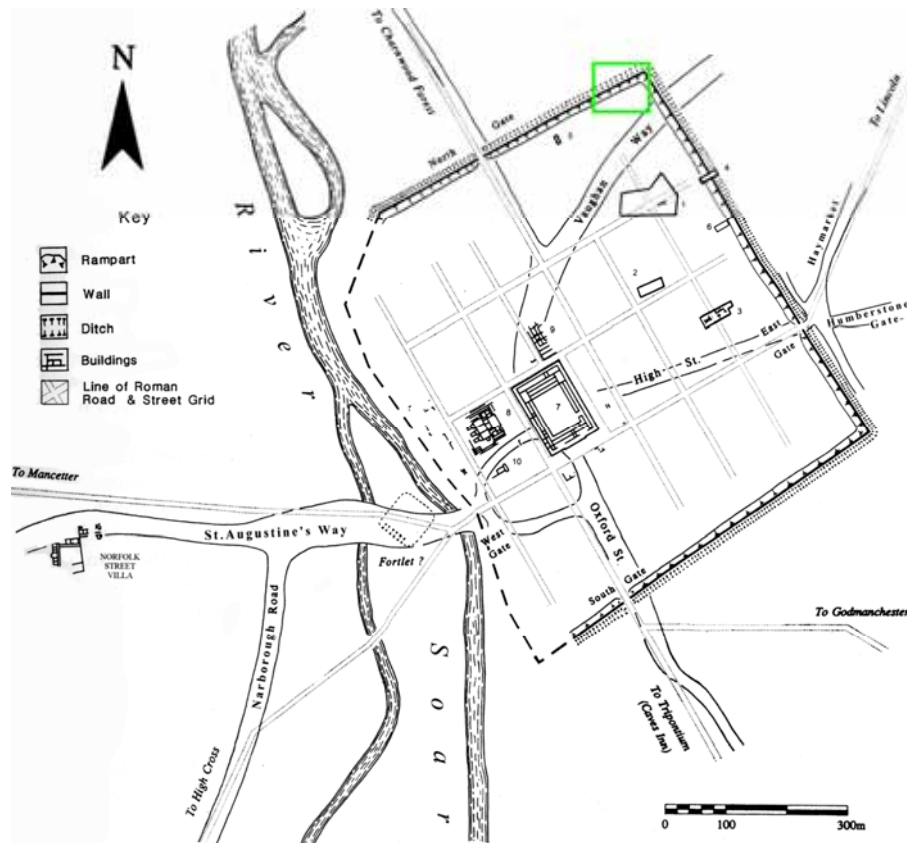


Fig. 2 Roman Leicester prior to recent excavations (from Connor and Buckley 1999). Site location highlighted. Cf. Fig. 3.

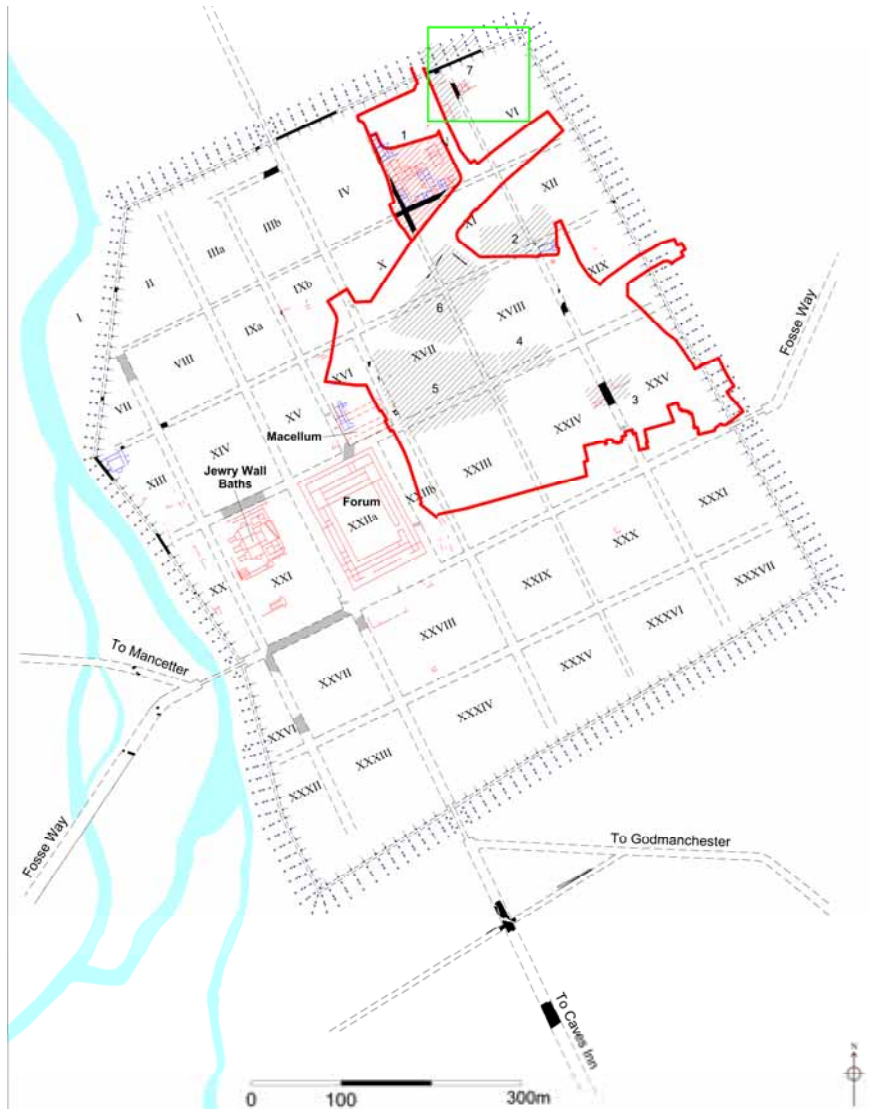


Fig. 3 Roman Leicester after recent archaeological work in the north-east quarter (Higgins et al 2009).

Highcross Leicester area highlighted in red, and excavations at: 1. Vine Street (Higgins et al 2009); 2. Causeway Lane (Connor & Buckley, 1999); 3. Little Lane and 4. St Peter's Lane (Shires 1988-1989, Lucas & Buckley 1989); 5. Freeschool Lane (Coward & Speed, 2008); 6. St Margaret's Baths (Gnanaratnam, 2006); 7. Sanvey Gate highlighted in green (Jarvis, here).

Anglo Saxon

Until very recently, there was little archaeological evidence for Leicester in the 5th to 10th centuries AD. Prior to the investigations at Leicester Square, structural evidence from this period had only been located outside the Roman south gate at Bonner's Lane (Finn 2004), and Oxford Street (Gossip 1999). Whilst dispersed settlement within the walls was thought possible based on evidence from scattered finds of pottery sherds and other artefacts from excavations and chance discoveries from the 19th and early 20th centuries (Connor and Buckley 1999, 83), no structural evidence had yet been found. Within the area to the south of the current site, previous excavations had produced comparatively large quantities of pottery and other finds of the early Anglo-Saxon period, especially at the Shires St. Peter's Lane excavation of 1988-9 (Lucas and Buckley 1989). Although unrecognised at the time, it is now thought possible that a highly-truncated structure may have been present, based on the discovery of quantities of hand-made pottery and a triangular bone comb recently re-analysed and dated to the late 4th to early 5th century (I. Riddler pers. comm.). At Causeway Lane, quantities of pottery and two other probable Anglo-Saxon objects were found (Connor and Buckley 1999); a similar quantity of pottery was also found at Little Lane, 200m east of Freeschool Lane (Lucas and Buckley 2007). Results at Leicester Square have produced the first structural evidence from within the town for the early Anglo Saxon period. Recently further structural evidence has been identified at sites slightly further into town including the Highcross Leicester sites of Vaughan Way and Freeschool Lane (Gnanaratnam 2009; Coward and Speed 2009), and

further likely post-Roman activity has been recorded just west on the Vine St. excavations (Higgins et al. 2009).

By 679, the Mercian see centred on Lichfield was partitioned and a bishopric was established at Leicester, with Cuthwine as the first bishop (Kirby 1965-6, 2); it subsequently underwent an uncertain period but was then re-established in 737 (*ibid*, 2). On the assumption that a cathedral was established during this period, perhaps on the site of the present St. Nicholas Church (Kenyon 1948), it is possible that this became a focus for periodic fairs and markets and maybe settlement, although evidence for this in the archaeological record is currently lacking. Ealheard may have been the last Saxon bishop of Leicester and probably fled to Dorchester on Thames in 874, before the Danish conquest was complete in 877 (*ibid*, 2) - when Leicester became one of the five Boroughs of the Danelaw (Ellis 1976). Of the late Saxon period in Leicester, prior to the current project, the only archaeological evidence amounted to some surviving fabric in St Nicholas Church together with chance discoveries of bone and metal objects principally along the line of the medieval High Street (now Highcross Street), leading to the suggestion that this was the principal route through the town (Courtney 1998, 114). A further view of Late Saxon Leicester is provided by the Domesday Book which records 322 houses, 65 burgesses and six churches, suggesting that Leicester was a flourishing town in the 10th–11th centuries on the eve of the Norman invasion of Britain in 1066 (Ellis 1976, 38-9).

Medieval

Fig. 4, Fig. 5

The development area straddles the edge of the walled town of medieval Leicester known as the north-east quarter. Within this quarter were back lanes which have survived substantially intact in the present street pattern. Evidence from excavations within this area suggests intensive domestic occupation in the 11th-13th centuries, indicated by large numbers of cess pits and wells with characteristic linear alignments. Little structural evidence has emerged so far, but it is assumed that there were built up frontages on at least some of the lanes.

To the south, the pit evidence from Causeway Lane and St. Peter's Lane points to the north-east quarter being intensively occupied until the early 14th century after which activity tails off. Domestic activity at Causeway Lane seems to have largely disappeared by the mid- 13th century being succeeded by gardens and orchards (Connor & Buckley 1999). Subsequent agricultural activity probably included the clearance of remaining Roman masonry in preparation for cultivation, as demonstrated by the discovery of mortared wall fragments and a lump of street metallurgy in medieval pits at Causeway Lane, in a part of the site otherwise truncated to the level of the natural in the late medieval period. Sites within this part of Leicester are characterised by substantial deposits of so-called 'garden soil' up to 3m in thickness, which appears to have derived from intensive cultivation and manuring from c.1450-1650. Dating evidence deriving from sample excavation by hand of some of these deposits on the Shires Little Lane and St Peter's Lane sites of 1988-9 indicates that the development of the soil was a gradual process. More recent excavations on Freeschool Lane and Vaughan Way (Gnanaratnam 2009; Coward and Speed 2009) has revealed the presence of medieval structural remains within the garden soil, showing that there are superimposed ground surfaces within it, usually invisible during the excavation process.

Whilst the population density of the north-east quarter of Leicester in the late medieval period may have been slight, the area was still provided with churches and cemeteries. St. Michael's Church apparently lay within the vicinity, to the east of All Saints, and survived until soon after 1450. Although its precise location remains uncertain, the discovery in 1956 of nine human skeletons in Vine Street suggests that it lies close to the excavation area. To the south, St. Peter's church stood until 1573 and has recently been discovered, together with its graveyard, on the north side of St. Peter's Lane, on the former St. Margaret's Baths site (Gnanaratnam, 2009). Although it is possible that St Peter's and St. Michael's may both be pre-Conquest foundations, no firm evidence for this has emerged as yet.

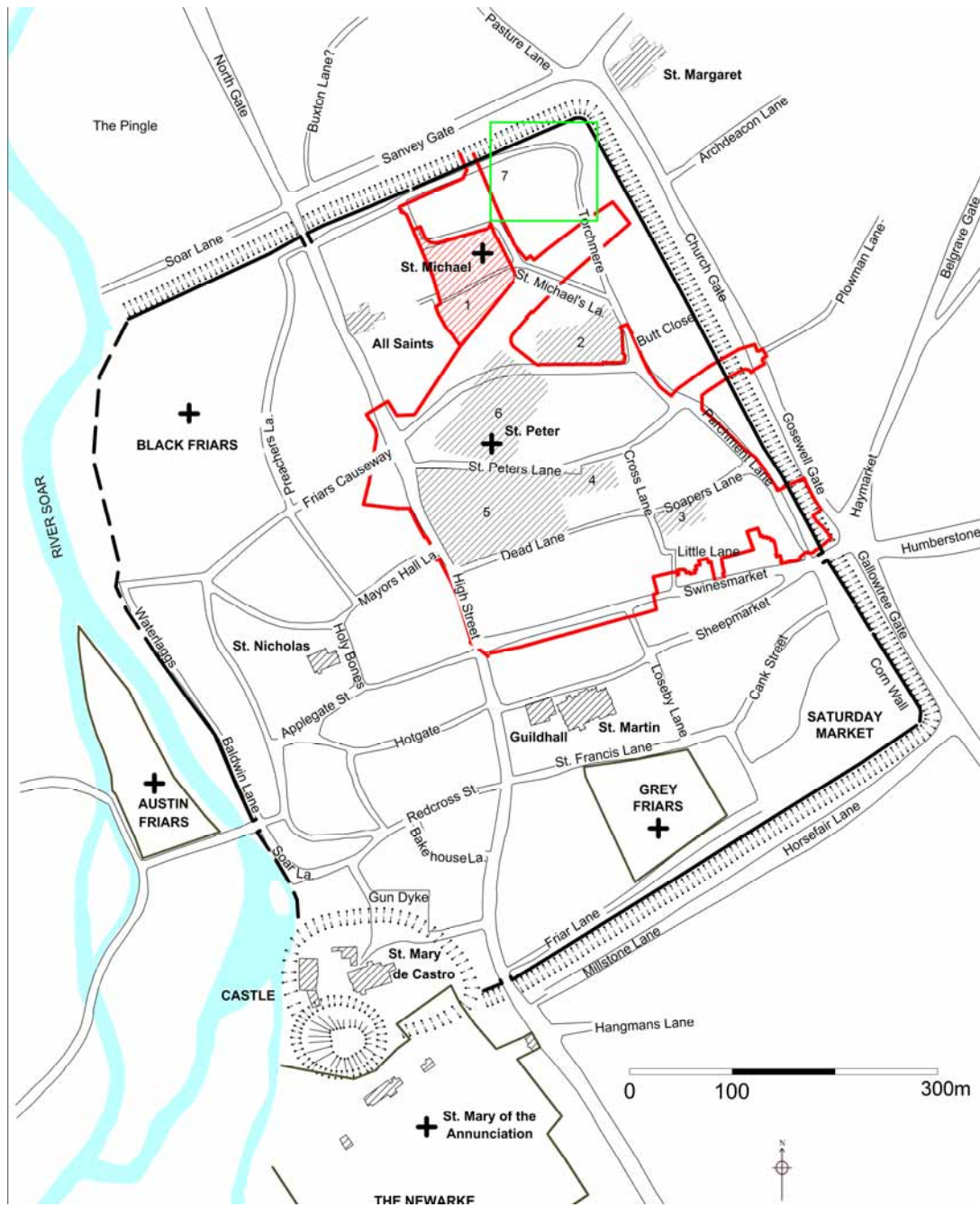


Fig. 4 Medieval Leicester after recent archaeological work in the north-east quarter (Higgins et al 2009).

Highcross Leicester area highlighted in red and excavations: 1. Vine Street (Higgins et al 2009); 2. Causeway Lane (Connor & Buckley, 1999); 3. Little Lane and 4. St Peter's Lane (Shires 1988-1989, Lucas & Buckley 1989); 5. Freeschool Lane (Coward & Speed, 2008); 6. St Margaret's Baths (Gnanaratnam, 2006). 7. Sarvey Gate (highlighted in green).



Fig. 5 Medieval St. Margaret's church and the east end of Sanvey Gate, before modern redevelopment and road widening. Looking east. Unattributed 19th-century engraving.

Post-medieval and modern

By the 18th century, the maps of both William Stukeley (1724) and Thomas Roberts (1741) suggest the area in the vicinity of the site had become largely gardens and orchards, whilst in the later 19th and 20th centuries, it was occupied by domestic and industrial buildings. Two large mills (the Corella Works and Mosan Mills) have survived to the present day and at the time of writing, have now been converted into apartments. The site was most recently occupied by modern prefabricated buildings attached to these two main brick-built factories, with car parking around.

Preliminary work

Development Proposals and Initial Archaeological Work

Development Proposals

The development proposals by Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd on behalf of Metropolitan Housing Partnership consisted of partial demolition and redevelopment of the whole of the former Corella Works site. In essence the development involved the conversion of the existing historical Corella Works and Mosan Mills buildings into residential apartments. Additionally, modern (20th century) buildings would be demolished as necessary to make way for a pair of new buildings (The Annexe and Burgess House buildings). The existing basements of the mill buildings would be utilised as car parks, with the Burgess House building also having a new basement car park constructed. The creation of access ramps between the basement car parks would also have a significant effect on ground. The development would also necessitate the installation of services, landscaping of gardens and creation of ground level car parks and access routes.



Fig. 6 Development area prior to demolition of modern buildings, photograph supplied by developer. North at top.

Initial Archaeological Work

Archaeological desk-based assessments of the proposed development area were previously commissioned from L-P Archaeology (Williams and Constable 2002), and John Samuels Archaeological Consultants by Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd (JSAC 2003), which confirmed the archaeological potential of the site. Following on from this a 'Design Brief for Archaeological Evaluation' was prepared by the City Archaeologist, after requests from University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of Thomas Fish and Sons Ltd. (ref dated 08 August 2003). Work would involve an evaluation stage by trial trenching of accessible parts of the site (i.e. not occupied by buildings or in use by the developers), in order to assess the impact of the proposed development on the underlying archaeological levels. ULAS was subsequently commissioned to undertake this work. Listed-Building Consent had been obtained for alterations to the Grade II listed Corella Works (to be 'The Chimney Building') on condition that a Level 2 Building Survey be carried out in accordance with a written brief (Coward 2005). Additionally, a photographic building survey of the Mosan Mills (to be 'Sanvey Mill') was commissioned, also by ULAS (Coward 2004).

Evaluation Results

Work was carried out between 6th October and 4th November 2003 (Area 1), and 8th March and 3rd June 2004 (Area 2; Fig. 7, Fig. 8) and identified a range of defensive structures of Roman and medieval date (Jarvis 2004, 2005). The east-west town wall was largely represented as a robber trench and only in the east of Area 2 did its foundations survive. The wall was associated with an earthen rampart, which survived in this area of the site virtually at current ground level, and consisted of varying layers of redeposited soil with occasional buried turf. At the back or 'tail' of the rampart (i.e. south end), structures were identified. These included *in situ* painted wall plaster representing the south-west corner of a mud-brick walled structure. Outside the line of the town wall, the massive Roman and medieval town defensive ditches were observed. These consisted of a series of intercutting ditches aligned east-west with a total width of *c.*20m, and continuing to a depth beyond *c.*3m. All three of the main defensive features were within the footprint of the proposed Burgess House building, and were thus threatened by the basement car park development. For most of the length of the defences, however, the rampart lies outside the line of the new build, and an agreement was made with the developer to preserve this feature *in situ* by building the ground level up by 0.5m. Further trial trenching also encountered evidence of medieval activity, including a stone building outside the town defences and fronting on to Sanvey Gate. To the south and within the town, robber trenches were exposed indicating the outline of a presumed Roman building, and to the east a north-south Roman street cut by a further robber trench. A 1.5m deep sequence

of surviving Roman stratigraphy was exposed just within the defences, and a similar sequence of medieval date was identified in Area 1.

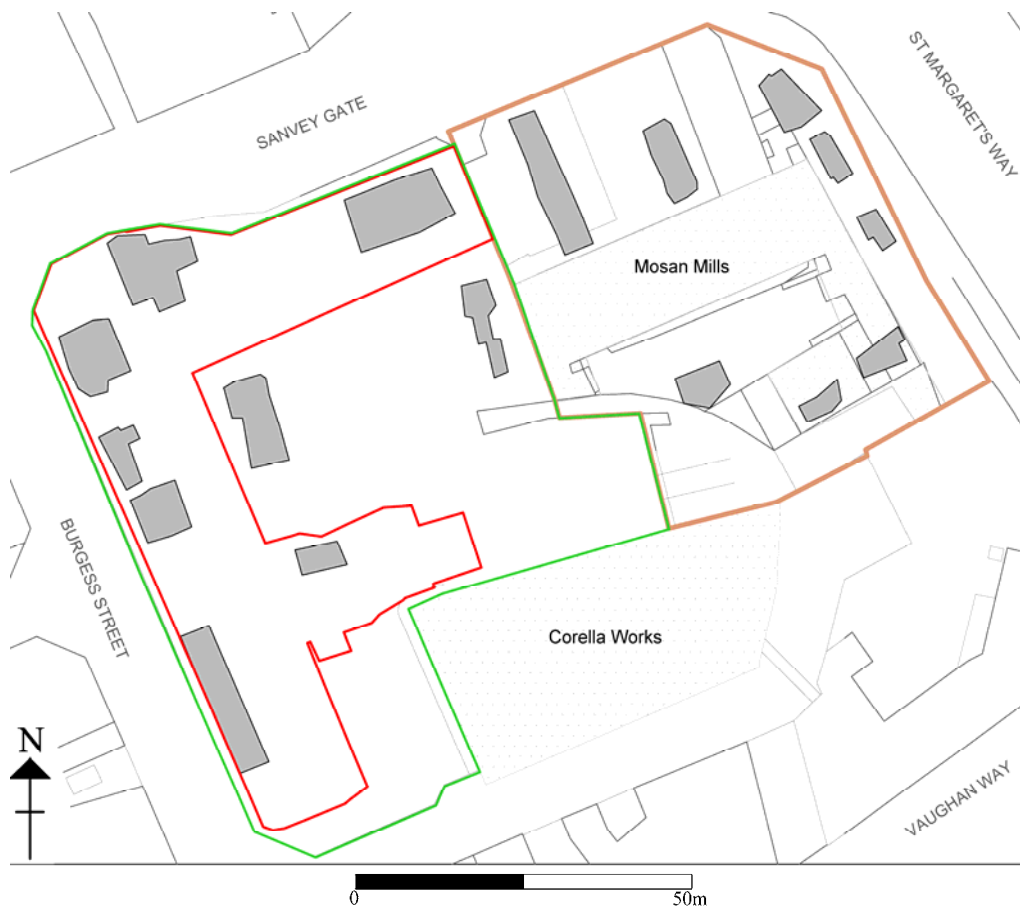


Fig. 7 Evaluation stage: Trial trench locations (greyed), Area 1 (brown), Area 2 (green) and basement area for full excavation (red). Cf. Fig. 8.

The Excavation

Detailed Development Proposals

The proposed Leicester Square development Area 1 proposals involved the construction of a new building adjacent to the St. Margaret's Way frontage (the Annexe building), refurbishment and conversion works on Sanvey (Mosan) Mill building, and construction of a ramp down into the basement of the Mill itself in the north of the area (from Sanvey Gate). Only the latter would have any significant potential archaeologically, hence a watching brief was specified for this work.

The Area 2 development proposals were more significant archaeologically. These would involve the construction of a roughly L-shaped apartment building along the Sanvey Gate and Burgess Street frontages (Fig. 8). The building would have basement car parking over its entire footprint, severely truncating any archaeological remains present, and thus the archaeological excavation strategy concentrated largely on this footprint, where total excavation would take place. The Corella Works building on the Junior Street frontage was to be retained and converted to residential use and an adjacent existing basement area would be converted to car parking, neither area affecting below ground archaeological deposits. However, access into this, and Burgess House, basement car parks required two new ramps to be excavated so these were included within the excavation scope.



Fig. 8 General plan, showing main areas referred to in text, cf. Fig. 1.

Method Statement

Based on the evaluation results and the development proposals, a scheme of archaeological site works was suggested by ULAS in consultation with the City Planning Archaeologist of Leicester City Council, in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority (Meek 2004). The objectives of the excavation were set out as follows:-

- Aim A1** - Evolution of the early Roman community and establishment of the *Civitas*
- Aim A2** - The development of the Roman and medieval town defences
- Aim A3** - Development and character of intramural and extramural activity within the north-east part of the Roman town
- Aim A4** - The character of post-Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation at Leicester
- Aim A5** - Development of the early medieval town
- Aim A6** - Evolution of the medieval suburbs
- Aim A7** - Development of the post-medieval town

Following on from this, an excavation specification (Method Statement) was produced with follow up fieldwork taking place in two stages:

Stage 1 - The excavation by machine of two trenches through the town defensive ditches within the footprint of the proposed basement on the Sanvey Gate frontage, and the recording of the trench sections.

- The excavation by machine and by hand of a third trench, with a full profile being recorded (if possible) from the Sanvey Gate frontage into the urban area of the historical town proper.
- The hand excavation of a small area on the Sanvey Gate frontage on which lie the remains of probable medieval buildings.

Stage 2 - The machine stripping of overburden from the remaining area of the footprints of the proposed basements down to the top of surviving archaeological levels.

- The hand excavation of all surviving archaeological deposits revealed within the footprints of the proposed basements/ramp on the Burgess Street frontage.
- The control and supervision of the removal of remaining material from the footprint of the proposed basement on the Sanvey Gate frontage during basement construction.

Excavation Methodology

Excavations took place between July and September 2004 (Stage 1), and November 2004 and March 2005 (Stage 2), with a final part of the Stage 2 area dealt with in September 2005. Stage 1, the excavation to the base of the town defensive ditches, required trenches some 3m or more deep from current ground level, hence the trenches were stepped for safety (Fig. 9). Finds recovered during machining were 3D located using a total station EDM. Photographs, then composite sections and plans of the ditches were produced, after machine excavation and hand cleaning (Fig. 10). Stage 1 also incorporated a small area of surface archaeology on the Sanvey Gate frontage area, in the very north-west corner of Area 2. Stage 2 consisted of excavating the stripped area within the footprint of the Burgess House building southwards from the line of the town defences and into the urban area proper, and including the southern basement car park ramps. This open area stripping was also carried out under close archaeological supervision using a 360° excavator with toothless ditching bucket where practicable. The level was stripped until *in situ* archaeological deposits were exposed, with the main removal being of modern levels and the later and post-medieval garden soils, unless discrete features were identified higher up in the sequence. The whole site area was then hand cleaned, pre-excavation planned and a strategy developed for excavating the exposed features (Fig. 11). Between the two stages (1 & 2) a watching brief was carried out on other groundworks. The majority of these groundworks were minor, but the sheet piling leader trench for the Burgess House building involved a 1m wide trench with a depth of up to c.2m being cut. Additionally a watching brief was carried out during removal of the ground for the whole basement area. This watching brief work exposed some deposits on site that were dealt with immediately that they were exposed.

Modern features were removed by machine where practicable, or by hand where they affected, and would clarify, archaeological deposits by their removal. After machining, the trenches were hand cleaned and the features assessed then recorded using standard ULAS procedures, including photographs, and scale plan and composite section drawings. The open area excavation was gridded out on a 5x5m grid using a total station EDM, and pre-excavation plans were drawn. Every context was drawn at 1:20 on a pre-printed 25cm square Permatrace-sheet representative of the 5m square grid it was located within. If the context crossed grids it was planned on multiple sheets representative of all the grids it was located in. All heights were calculated to above Ordnance Datum (OD) from a fixed temporary benchmark (TBM) established within the site. All stratigraphic units were given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS urban context sheets. Specialised features (e.g. masonry, inhumation burial, worked timbers) and deposits (environmental material) were recorded on relevant pro-forma ULAS sheets. Due to the complex nature of the urban stratigraphy the single context system was adopted where appropriate to produce a stratified plan record of features, and corresponding Harris context and plan matrices were maintained during excavations. All features were sample excavated at a minimum to characterise them and recover dating and environmental evidence. Large medieval pits were half sectioned initially, and were excavated further if they had structural evidence, e.g. wells. Deep features were dealt with on a watching brief during the earth-moving phase of the development groundworks (the 'muck shift') where the basement area was created. This allowed the collection of archaeological material from the lowest fills of deep wells under safe conditions.



Fig. 9 Sanvey Gate frontage area excavations, and machine excavation of the town ditch sections ongoing. Looking east.



Fig. 10 Recording the town ditches. Section here of inner town ditch sequence, collapsed town wall to right of image, looking east.

Post-excavation analysis

Material from site was initially processed and catalogued in order to produce an Assessment Report (Jarvis 2006). For the analysis stage, all site records were entered on to a custom-built ULAS relational database, allowing records of contextual information, finds categories, and environmental material to be cross-referenced. Site matrices were collated initially by hand to produce temporary Harris matrices for the plans and stratigraphic sequence. The majority of the site was then entered onto the *Stratify* database (<http://www.stratify.org/index.htm>, V1.4) to test the stratigraphic sequence, allow phasing of deposits and production of Harris matrix diagrams. This was linked into the overall database to provide phase and subgroup/group information, as below. The town ditch sequence and the less deeply stratified areas of site

(predominantly the south area adjacent to Junior Street) were not entered into the *Stratify* database system instead being phased based on parallels and dating evidence as they were not directly stratigraphically relatable (e.g. due to considerable post-medieval truncation). Five levels of categorisation were used to aid the analysis of the archaeological deposits recorded:

1. All individual contexts recorded on site (i.e. cuts, fills and layers) which could be demonstrably shown to be stratigraphically and interpretatively linked (e.g. all contexts assigned to an individual pit) were assigned a principal context number, usually the feature's cut or lowest context number for the layer. Context numbers are quoted here where appropriate, square brackets [0] denoting cut features and round brackets (0) denoting fills or deposits.
2. Subgroups and groups were a further level of hierarchy applied where necessary with principal context numbers being amalgamated determined by a stratigraphic or interpretative association.
3. Groups were assigned an interpretative area based on their spatial and stratigraphic location within the site.
4. These were amalgamated into sub-phases according to site information and data from finds specialists in order to contribute towards dating and interpretation of the site record.
5. Every sub-phase was assigned a broader phase based on interpretation and dating from all sources of evidence.

RESULTS

Excavation results

The following account of the excavation results employs a period and phase nomenclature as shown below.

	Phase 0	Unphased
<i>Prehistoric period</i>	Phase 1	Pre-Roman (Pre AD43)
<i>Roman period</i>	Phase 2	Early Roman (mid-1st-mid 2nd century AD) Subphases - 2a Transitional/Earliest Roman (1st C) 2b ER (late 1st- early 2nd C) 2c mid-late 2nd C
	Phase 3	Mid Roman later 2nd-3rd C Subphases - 3a later 2nd C 3b Early 3rd C 3c Later 3rd C only
	Phase 4	Late Roman (4th century)
<i>Anglo-Saxon</i>	Phase 5	Early Anglo-Saxon (c.400-650)
	Phase 6	Middle Anglo-Saxon (c.650-850)
<i>Saxo-Norman period</i>	Phase 7	Saxo-Norman (c.850-1150)
<i>Medieval period</i>	Phase 8	Earlier Medieval (c.1100-1250)
	Phase 9	Medieval (c.1250-1400)
	Phase 10	Late Medieval (c.1400-1500)
<i>Post-medieval period</i>	Phase 11	Early Post-medieval (c.1500-1650)
	Phase 12	Late Post-medieval (c.1650-1750)
<i>Modern period</i>	Phase 13	Early Modern (c.1750-1900)
	Phase 14	20th Century (c.1900-Present)

Quality of the evidence

In general, survival of archaeological deposits across the site was good despite a certain degree of widespread horizontal truncation from prolonged later medieval and post-medieval cultivation, and localised areas of deeper vertical truncation and disturbance from post-medieval and modern pitting, 19th- and 20th- century building foundations, and modern service trenches. The deepest sequence of survival was in the central area of site adjacent to the line of the town defences. Here truncation was less,

presumably because this line has been respected and maintained over centuries, and therefore reserved from cultivation. Additionally the line of Long Lane (Olive Hill) had preserved deposits underneath it. Away from this line, truncation increased southwards such that adjacent to Junior Street only cut features survived.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements must go to the following individuals and organisations, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their particular assistance:

The fieldwork project was financed by Thomas Fish Ltd, from whom thanks go to Steve Bradbury, Jim Hardie, on behalf of Metropolitan Housing Partnership who also kindly funded the post-excavation analysis. Deborah Higgins from the latter, and Gary Taylor of APS. James Meek was the project manager for ULAS during the fieldwork stage. The project was monitored by successive City Archaeologists Richard Clark and Chris Wardle and we would like to thank them for their support and advice during all stages of the project. We would also like to thank Simon and John Houghton of Houghton's Groundworks. Also thanks to Lynden Cooper, John Coward, Neil Finn, Tim Higgins and Martin Shore of ULAS. Finally, we would like to thank Richard Buckley for his tireless negotiation and project management on behalf of ULAS.

The contributions of the following ULAS staff and individuals for processing, conserving, maintaining and analysing all material removed from site: *Finds Processing and analysis*, Nick Cooper with the aid of Heidi Addison, Sam Bocoock, Terri Davies, Graham Morgan, Dan Prior and Diane Randle; *Pottery, Tile and BM Analysis*, Alice Forward, Tony Gnanaratnam, Elizabeth Johnson, and Deborah Sawday; *Environmental Analysis*, James Grieg, A Hill, Angela Monckton with the aid of Anita Radini; *Human Skeletal Analysis*, Hari Jacklin; *Database*, Matt Beamish, Wayne Jarvis, and the following individuals for their respective *Specialist Analysis*: J Browning, R Buckley, H E M Cool, N Cooper, J A Davies, A Forward, J Grieg, D A Higgins, E Johnson, A Monckton, G Morgan, A Radini, D Sawday; *¹⁴C Dating*: Göran Possnert and Maud Söderman from the Angström and Tandem Laboratories, Uppsala Universitet, Sweden.

Particular thanks also go to Professor David Mattingly from the University of Leicester for his time and insights. The draft report was refereed by Richard Buckley, Lynden Cooper and Nick Cooper who provided many helpful comments for improvements to the text. Phase, site and feature plans were produced by Wayne Jarvis; and finds drawings by David Hopkins. Photographs were taken by numerous ULAS staff members. The report as a whole was produced and edited by Wayne Jarvis, with contributions from Sophie Clarke.

Finally, we would like to thank the excavation staff, without whom this project could never have been brought to fruition:

Site Director, Wayne Jarvis; *Site Supervisors*, Andy Hyam, Lou Huscroft, John Tate; *Excavators*, Steve Baker, Jennie Barrett, Alex Beacock, Siobhan Brocklehurst, Jen Browning, Pete Burns, Simon Cleggett, Jon Coward, Lucy Griffin, James Harvey, Martin Henson, Matt Hurford, Hari Jacklin, Keith Johnson, Greg Jones, Sebastian Jones, James Meek, Dave Parker, Matt Parker, Neil Pollock, Dan Prior, Gavin Speed, Clare Strachan, Eric Thurston, Katie Tucker.



Fig. 11 Cleaning the main area looking south-west towards the Vine Street site.

PHASE 0: UNPHASED ACTIVITY

Fig. 12

Summary of Phase 0

A few features determined as unphased due to lack of dating evidence and/or any stratigraphic information.

?Pit [618]

Pits/Linear features [1770][1771]

Possible small post-holes [2159][2510][2607][2616]

Cut [618] was a pit or scoop in front of the town defences in trial trench 10, significance unclear (not illustrated). Fill (619) from this did not produce any dating evidence, from a feature which was at least 0.7m long, 0.3m wide and 0.3m deep. Two large pit/linear features were observed in the north-west leader trench (beyond the town ditches), again their significance is unclear (Fig. 12). Several ephemeral features possibly post-holes within the main area; although undated some are definitely Phase 3a or later, and perhaps are associated with post-Roman activity in the north-south street area (not illus.).

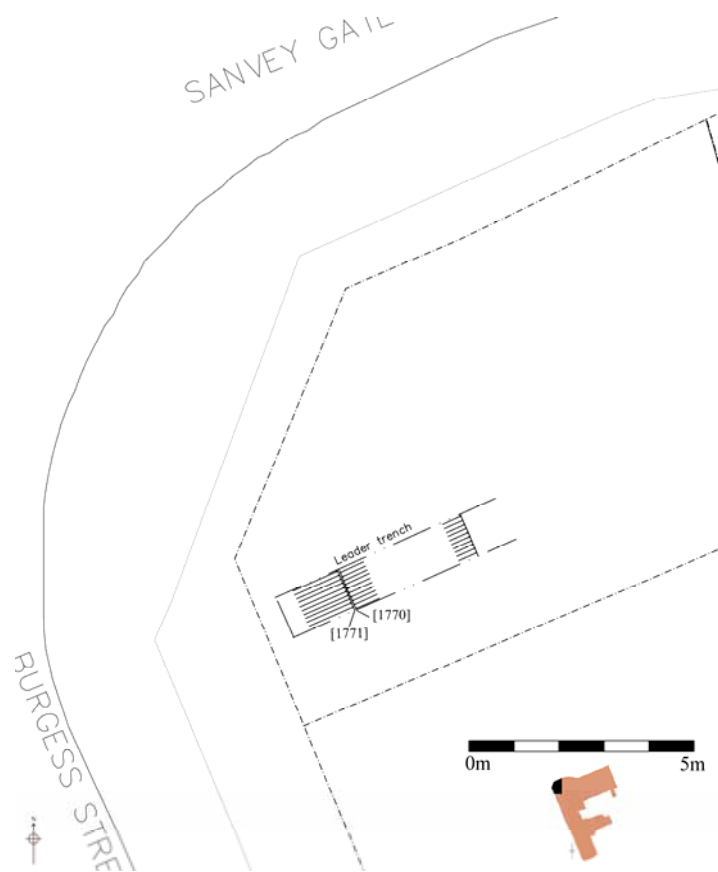


Fig. 12 Phase 0 (unphased) features (Sanvey Gate frontage).

PHASE 1: PRE-ROMAN ACTIVITY (PRE AD43)

Summary of Phase 1

No features, but some evidence of activity from pottery and struck flint. Natural soil build up across site.

Unstratified and residual finds (flint and pottery) of early date.

Buried soil? (930)

No definite pre-Roman deposits were identified during the excavations on site. Finds of worked flint, thirty-six in total, do provide evidence for early activity on site though these came from residual or unstratified deposits and are thus redeposited. A single bladelet likely to be of Mesolithic date was found, with the rest of the flint being typologically Neolithic to Early Bronze Age in date. One sherd of Prehistoric pottery was recovered from a transitional (Phase 2a) feature (context 3221), this being a sherd of Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware.

Stratigraphically, the earliest material on site was naturally formed silty loam (930) overlying the natural substratum of river terrace deposits and could be traced across much of the site. Where excavated this layer produced occasional pottery dating to the mid- to late 1st century AD but it seems likely that this is a reworked pre-Roman deposit.

Little further evidence of pre-Roman occupation survived. A few, stratigraphically early but otherwise undated pits ([2809] and [2816]) may be this early but are more likely Phase 2.

Discussion of Phase 1

Although all features were sample excavated on site, there is no evidence for any substantial pre-Roman activity. Some limited early activity is indicated by occasional finds, but this is difficult to assess without any features to indicate its character.

PHASE 2: LATE IRON AGE/EARLY ROMAN TRANSITION (MID-1ST CENTURY TO MID-2ND CENTURY AD)

Fig. 14 - Fig. 32

Summary of Phase 2

The earliest identifiable settlement activity consisted of a small group of native-style features possibly dating as early as the late Iron Age/Roman transition. To the west of these, linear ditches and structural evidence indicated the presence of a significant early boundary, later fossilised into the Roman street-grid with some evidence for occupation. Initially probably of mid-late 1st century date, the boundary was reinstated and maintained well into the 2nd century, and with the addition of the main north-south street and a side street into insula V. Probably by the mid 2nd century, a stone founded building in this insula probably of strip-building form, and a clay walled structure in insula VI were also constructed.

Phase 2a Transitional Activity (mid-late 1st century AD)

Fig. 14, Fig. 15

Soil layer (929)

Roundhouse (**Building A**) [2956]; beam-slot [3225] gully [3194] and other associated gullies [2952][2954]

Ditches and Gullies [1749][3095][3107][3185] [2621][2926]

Timber Slot? [1919]

Post-holes [2678]? [2727][2729]

Pits [2809]? [2816]? [2035][2734] [3234][3243]

Five sherds of transitional Roman pottery that would date to the mid-late 1st century were recovered from within the central part of the site, most of these as residual finds within later contexts ((976) (2543) (2611) and (3051)). On the eastern side of the site, the subsoil was truncated by a series of early features, one suggestive of a possible roundhouse (**Building A**), possibly associated with other features. A short segment of a shallow curvilinear gully [2956], measuring 0.4m wide and 0.22m deep, was the northern arc of what could be a circular round-house structure measuring c.6m in diameter. This had a terminal end indicating a probable south-east entrance. It contained three sherds of pottery dated to the second half of the 1st century, or possibly the early 2nd. To the west was a pair of intercutting gullies, [3194] and [3225], respectively 0.43m wide by 0.1m deep and 0.3m wide by 0.25m deep, the former containing one presumably residual sherd of Neolithic pottery. These extended for 12.45m across the full length of the excavated area on a similar north-south alignment to ditches [3095/3107/3185] to the west (see below), with a slight curve towards the east at both ends. Although both features were relatively truncated, the square-cut profile of [3225], the stratigraphically later of these two features, led the excavation team to interpret this as a structural cut, for housing the footings of a timber palisade.

To the east of the ring gully structure and close to its entrance, a pair of shallow linear features [2952] and [2954], both less than 3.6m in length, intersected to create a right-angle on a roughly north-south/east-west axis. The former was 0.3m wide by 0.25m deep and the latter 0.23m wide and 0.08m deep. These may have been gullies, perhaps the remains of a secondary structure adjacent to the roundhouse. They cut a thin soil layer which post-dated the roundhouse gully, indicating that they are somewhat later than its construction. Material from one deposit in [2952] produced 2nd-century pottery, but this was considered to be later slumping.

To the north of this area was part of another feature [1749], possibly part of a 0.5m wide and 0.3m deep east-west gully seen just north of the later town wall line that produced two sherds of mid-late 1st century pottery. Also a soil build up ('topsoil' 929) was seen intermittently across site that produced late 1st-early 2nd century pottery, including that into [2952] but it was not always possible to identify the relationship between this soil layer and other features. The different character of this group of features – having a 'native' (curvilinear) look to them particularly compared to the more typical rectilinear Roman features to the west that are described below – is intriguing. They potentially indicate native style activity of transitional date, adjacent to the early Roman settlement proper, and it is tempting to suggest that they may be part of a larger native 'vicus'-like site outside the initial Roman boundary as demarcated by the

large ditches to the west. This is perhaps the best explanation for the presence of these features at such a distance from the established core of the late Iron Age activity much further to the west next to the river. There, at a site now St. Nicholas Circle, excavations identified another possible roundhouse and an associated timber slot that were thought to be of 1st century BC date (Clay and Pollard 1994, 37).

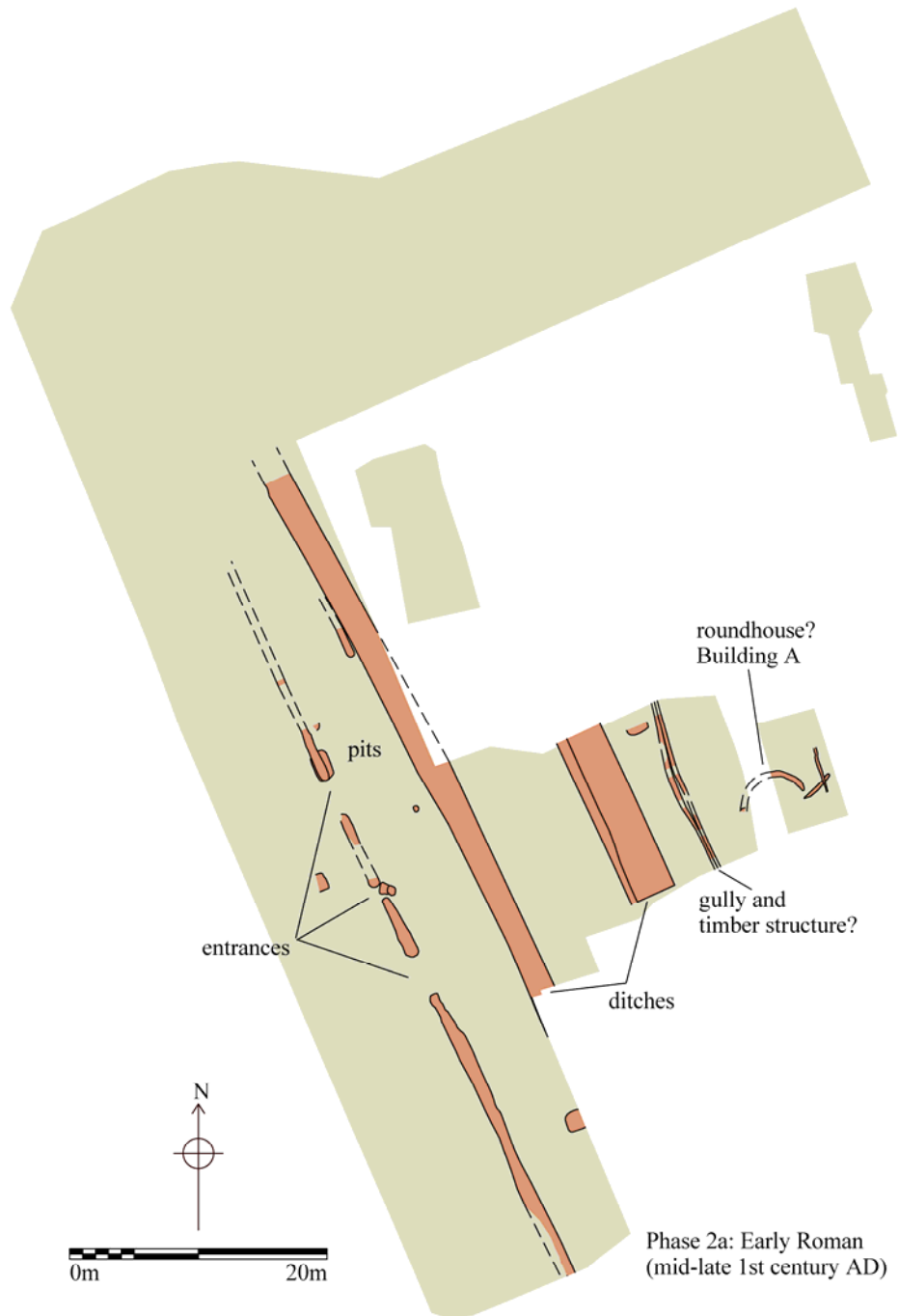


Fig. 13 Phase 2a (1st century) features, interpretive plan.



Fig. 14 Phase 2a, feature contexts.

West of the curvilinear enclosure area was a series of intercutting ditches, all on the same north-west/south-east alignment, corresponding with the pattern of the later, formalised street grid. At least three re-cuts were recorded on the same alignment, [3095] [3107] [3185] in sequence, each varying in profile and running for at least *c.* 14.5m across the site before continuing beyond the edge of the excavated area. Ditch [3107] was 2.9m wide, 0.6m deep, more than 14.5m long and cut feature [3095], a 0.8m wide and 0.5m deep U-shaped ditch. The remaining ditch, [3185] was 0.44m wide and 0.26m deep with a U-shaped profile. Approximately 11 metres further again to the west, another substantial ditch on the same alignment could be traced for 44.7m across the site. This ditch [2621] measured 2.3m wide and 1.3m deep, with steep, V-shaped sides leading to a near-flat base. Pottery recovered from the primary fills indicated a date within the mid-late 1st century for the first episodes of silting, with a humic fill perhaps indicating a relatively long period of the feature remaining open. Pottery retrieved from the uppermost fills indicates that the ditch was still in use as a boundary during the 2nd century (see below; Fig. 26). Adjacent to this, a short stretch of another linear feature [2926] was seen. The large paired ditch system thus demarcates an area which does correspond with the north-south street also seen on

adjacent sites, which has traditionally been seen as only being established later (in the early 2nd century). However, taken together with evidence of similarly early fills in the roadside ditches at the Shires Little Lane site (Buckley and Lucas 2007), this suggests the presence of a street on this alignment perhaps as early as the mid-late 1st century, pre-dating the generally accepted date of the establishment of the town-wide street grid.

However, located approximately 7m to the west of [2621], a third linear feature, [1919] (Fig. 15), on the same north-west/south-east alignment, took the form of an interrupted gully up to 1.25m wide and 0.65m deep, with vertical sides indicating a structural function. Two breaks in the line possibly marked the position of access points through the boundary line. The southernmost of these was a gap *c.*3.3m wide with no associated features whilst the second gap, which was *c.*5m to the north, was only *c.*1.1m wide and was blocked by two large, square post-holes [2727] and [2729], respectively 0.84m and 0.66m across, which contained the remains of tile and granite packing material. Finds within the primary fills of these features also indicate a mid-late 1st century date for their construction. Considering this timber structure and the substantial size of the adjacent early ditches together, they may in fact represent the line of an earlier town boundary, which was incorporated into the town plan when the *insulae* were laid out.



Fig. 15 Stratified sequence at the north end of *insula* V. Early north-south linear [1919], cut by east west ditches [1774] and [2385]. To left, sub defences wall foundation trench (robbed) [2523].....



Fig. 16 Centre, sub defences wall foundation trench (largely robbed) [2523]. Working shot, looking west.

Very little evidence of other activity could be dated to this period, with only a diffuse scattering of pits to either side of the ditches present. This may be in part due to truncation from later Roman activity reducing the ground level across the site. This would not be without precedent in the north-east quarter for other sites (Higgins et al. 2009) have produced evidence of widespread ground clearance prior to the establishment of the street grid perhaps during the early 2nd century AD. The pits, [2035][2734][3234][3243], were around 1.3m-1.7m across and 0.8m-1.25m deep and typically contained relatively clean fills containing mid-1st to early 2nd century material. Pits [2809] [2816] had no dating evidence other than pre-dating other early Roman features. One contained an initial, charcoal-rich fill but otherwise they were all backfilled with redeposited or naturally accumulated soil. Considering the dispersed nature of these pits and the absence of abundant domestic waste in them, they probably represent localised quarrying for sand and gravel.



Fig. 17 Foundations surviving for part of the line of sub defences wall [2523]. Looking west.

Phase 2b Establishment of the street grid (late 1st to early 2nd century AD)

Fig. 19 - Fig. 21

Ditches [3050] [3097][2345], Phase 2a [2621] still partly an open feature

Pits [2599][2468][2376][2288][2236][2916][3136]

Post-line a: post-holes [1821][1836][1868][1911][1985][2029][2231][2365]

Timber structures: Palisade trench? [2459], post-holes [2256] [2375] [2369] [2416], post-holes [2424] [2427] [2663] [2615] [2591] [2564] [2560], beam-slot [2722], post-holes [2094] [2755] [2776], clay layer (2571)

Gully [2773]. (Area 1 watching brief) - gully [196], ?post-hole [198]

Cross-street (2248 etc.)

Ditches [2011] [1802]

Post-line b: post-holes [1909][1940][1955][1966][2025][2037][2125][2138][2147]

Little discernible evidence survived which marked the moment the street grid was laid out across site. The earlier, transitional-period gullies [3194] and [3225] on the eastern side of the main site area were sealed beneath layers of soil containing predominantly early 2nd-century pottery, and a new ditch cut [3050] was constructed just to the west, mirroring Phase 2a linear features [3095], [3107] and [2621] (Fig. 19). This ditch extended across the full width of the excavated area, running for approximately 13.9 metres, and measured 1.9m wide by 0.5m deep with a V-shaped profile. Its fill produced a single sherd of transitional pottery along with late 1st- to early 2nd-century material. Ditch [2621] (see above) to the west was still an open feature at this stage judging from the pottery evidence. This ditch, along with [3050], appear to have formed the boundaries of a thoroughfare or perhaps initially unmetalled 'street', measuring c.12m wide, and corresponding with the known layout of the street grid. Similarly and also on the same alignment, a narrow feature [3097], measuring 0.51m wide and 0.18m deep, located just to the west of [3050], may have been a recut of earlier ditch [3095]. It is narrow enough to possibly be a drain however, which may explain why it appears to narrow the width of the 'thoroughfare' to c.9m. This feature is possibly slightly later than [3050]. It is perhaps possible that this north-south street was metalled as early as this phase, and the series of quarry pits described below might support an early date for this. Nevertheless, metalling can only be shown to be definitely present from the mid 2nd century (Phase 2c). A continuation of this street to the south at Causeway Lane indicated that the first roadside ditch had filled and been recut late in the 1st century, before any metalling was laid (Cooper and Buckley 2003, 33).

East of the boundary ditches, in what can from this date be described as *insula* VI, was large circular pit [3136], up to 2.5m wide and 0.75m deep (Fig. 20). This produced a good assemblage of late 1st or perhaps early 2nd-century pottery, which having later consolidation layers in its top provide a TPQ for the later (Phase 3) **Building D**. Further pits were seen, following the line of the 'street' and to its western side in *insula* V (Fig. 19 - Fig. 21). Pit [2599] was roughly square in plan, c.1m across and 0.25m deep, with 21 sherds of early 2nd-century pottery from the main fill. The largest of these five pits, at the northern end of the group, was pit [2468] which measured 2.4m across and 0.85m deep. Its fill produced no dateable material and it seems likely that it was originally excavated for the extraction of sand and gravel. Pit [2236], located at the southern end of the group was also substantial, measuring 1.93m long by 1.41m wide and 1.6m deep, and was found to contain sherds of pottery dating from the late 1st to the early 2nd century. Pits [2376] and [2288] located in the centre of the group, were highly truncated, but sherds of late 1st/early 2nd-century pottery were recovered from both features, with a turquoise frit melon bead and a fragment of a glass vessel found within the fill of [2288]. The ground surrounding the two pits showed signs of intense burning, perhaps indicative of some industrial activity to which the pitting may have been related.

To the west of the pits, the phase 2a interrupted gully [1919] appears to have been re-cut in the early 2nd century by a linear feature [2345] (Fig. 19). This gully measured approximately 0.9m wide by 0.5m deep and ran from the edge of excavation in the south-east, for 52.35 metres towards the north-west before being truncated by a large quarry pit [2916]. Following the eastern edge of the gully, on the same alignment, were eight post-holes spaced c.1.4m apart and stretching for 12.5m. These represent the remains of a timber structure (**Post-line a**), with two distinct gaps in the line perhaps indicating where post-holes had not survived.

On the western side of gully [2345] was good evidence of established occupation, and on the same alignment. This was represented by a series of structural cuts (probable beam-slots), post-holes and stake-holes, forming a coherent, rectilinear structural pattern, located *c.*9.5m away from the street frontage. The features are likely to represent the remains of a range of timber structures, covering an area measuring at least 25.8m long by at least 4m wide. The structural slots were typically quite narrow, the longest of these, [2459], aligned with gully [2345] and running for 25.8m, measuring between 0.25m and 0.35m wide and 0.38m deep. Clusters of post-holes and stake-holes were recorded at regular intervals along the length of slot [2459], representing perhaps structural intervals or junctions along the length of the wall. No significant occupational deposits were found in association with the structures, but a small spread of clay (2571) situated immediately to the south of perpendicular beam-slot [2722], may represent the remains of a related earth floor. The function of these structures is unclear as only one east-west return alignment (feature [2722]) survived, so it cannot be said with any certainty that this was a range of timber buildings. It may be that the structures were paddocks or some other fenced area. However the return line was shallow (at 0.28m deep) and perhaps others had been truncated, or ephemeral structures could have sat on the ground surface with no sub-surface evidence so the possibility that these were buildings can not be dismissed. Very little dating evidence was obtained from these features; the few sherds of pottery that were found dated broadly from the late 1st to the early 2nd century AD, indicating that the structure did not fall out of use until after this date, but the length of time that the structure was in use could not be established.

The northern end of gully [2345] subsequently went out of use and was sealed by a metalled surface (2248 etc.) which may represent a cross-street, running east-west across the northern edge of *insula V*. This seems to have been maintained through subsequent phases, although always having a rather ephemeral nature, being cut by other features and reinstated repeatedly.

Meanwhile at the southern end of ditch [2345] and **Post-line a**, close to the edge of the excavated area, these features were bisected by ditch [2011] running at right-angles (Fig. 21). The visible section of this ditch extended for 14 metres, running from north-east to south-west, and measured up to 1.6m wide and 0.65m deep. The ditch was accompanied by a second timber structure, represented by a line of nine post-holes (**Post-line b**), located along its northern edge. Taken together, the two features are likely to represent the remains of a property boundary at right angles to the north-south street, which fell out of use by the early to mid 2nd century. A scattering of small post-holes and gullies to the south of ditch [2011] may represent the remains of domestic occupation within the plot defined by the boundary. Parallel to this ditch was a further linear cut feature [1802] continuing east and outside the site area. Along with the cross-street these features indicate a further parcelling up of the land into east-west aligned strips.

Further similar features potentially of this date include gully [196] and ?post-hole [198] seen during the access ramp construction in Area 1. These were sited in front (i.e. north) of the line of the later town wall. Gully [196] was over 4m long, 0.5m wide and 0.35m deep, and on the same alignment as the large linear arrangement seen to the west. Adjacent to this was ?post-hole [198] only seen in section but measuring 0.5m in diameter and 0.35m deep. These features did not produce finds either, but were stratigraphically pre-defences and indicate occupation activity in the very north-east of the town.

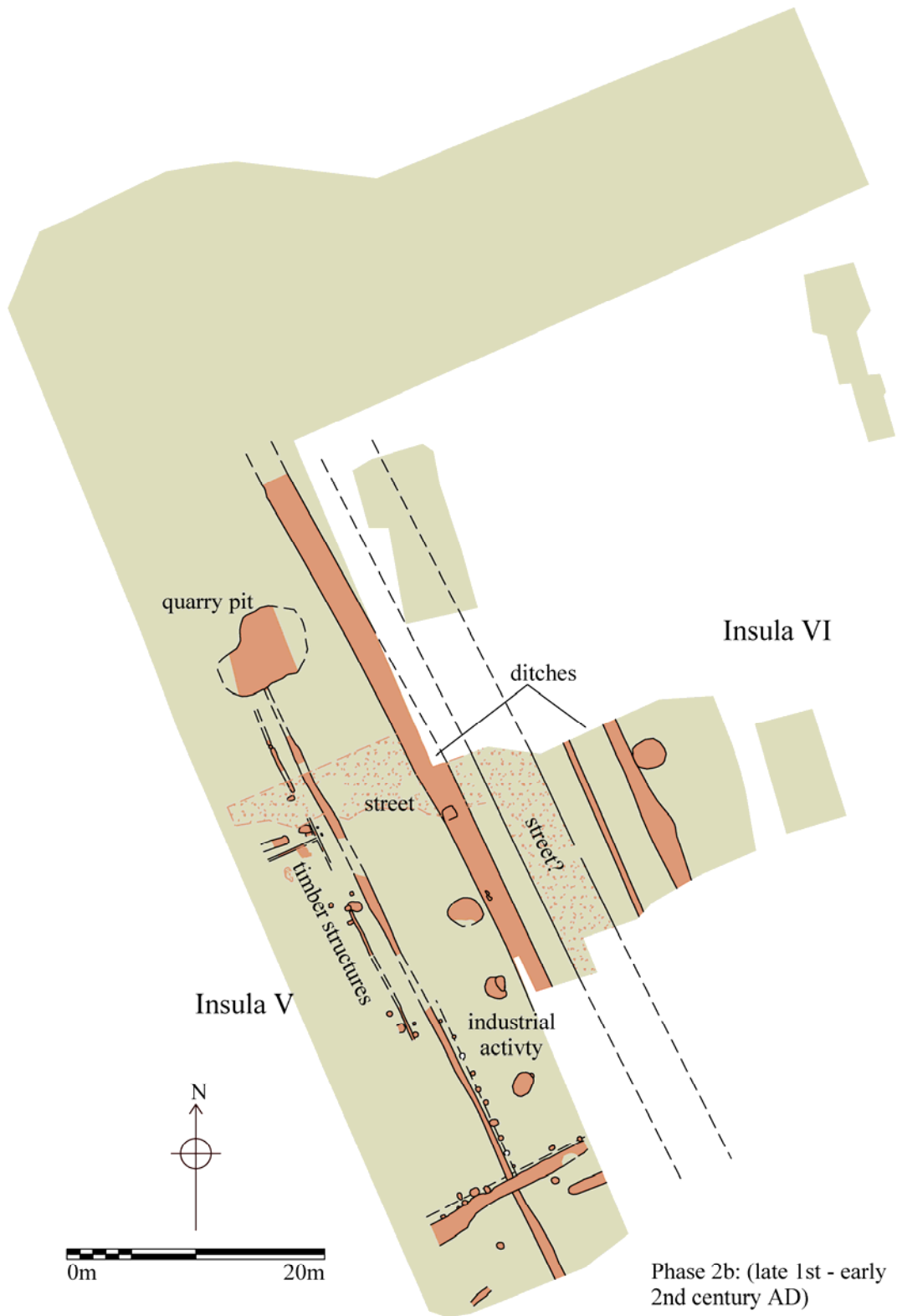


Fig. 18 Phase 2b (late 1st-early 2nd century), interpretive plan.

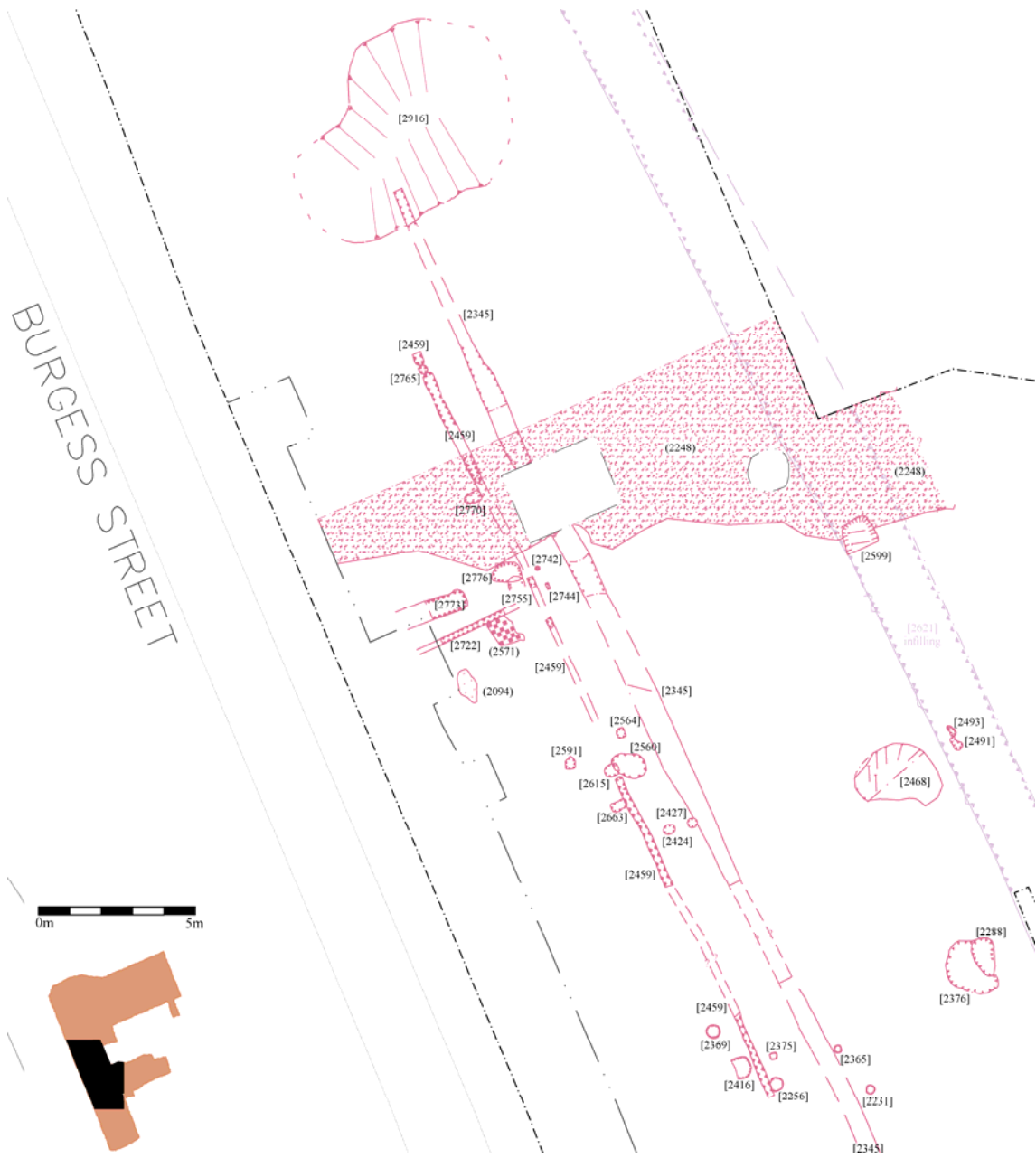


Fig. 19 Phase 2b feature contexts, main area.

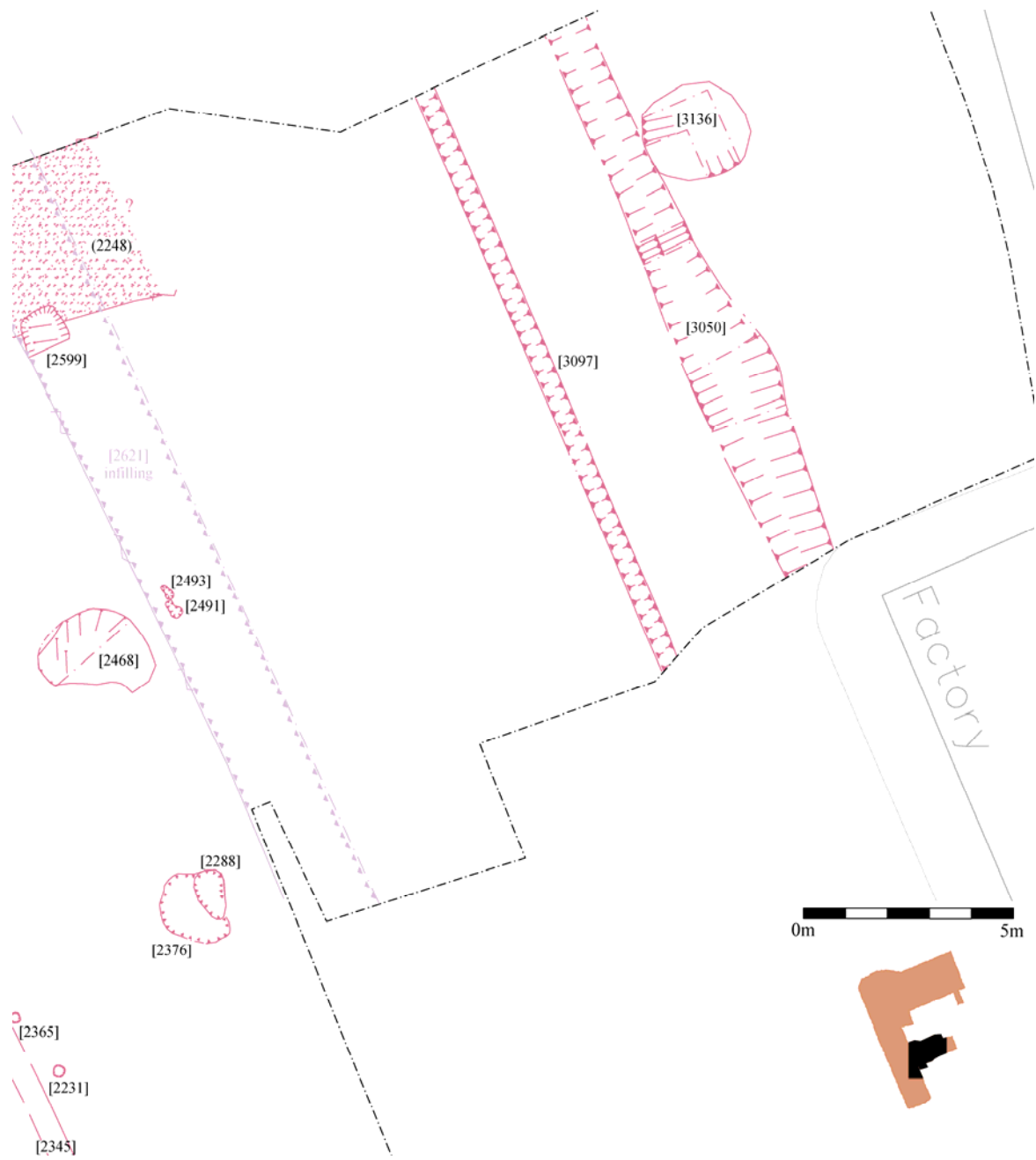


Fig. 20 Phase 2b feature contexts, east area.

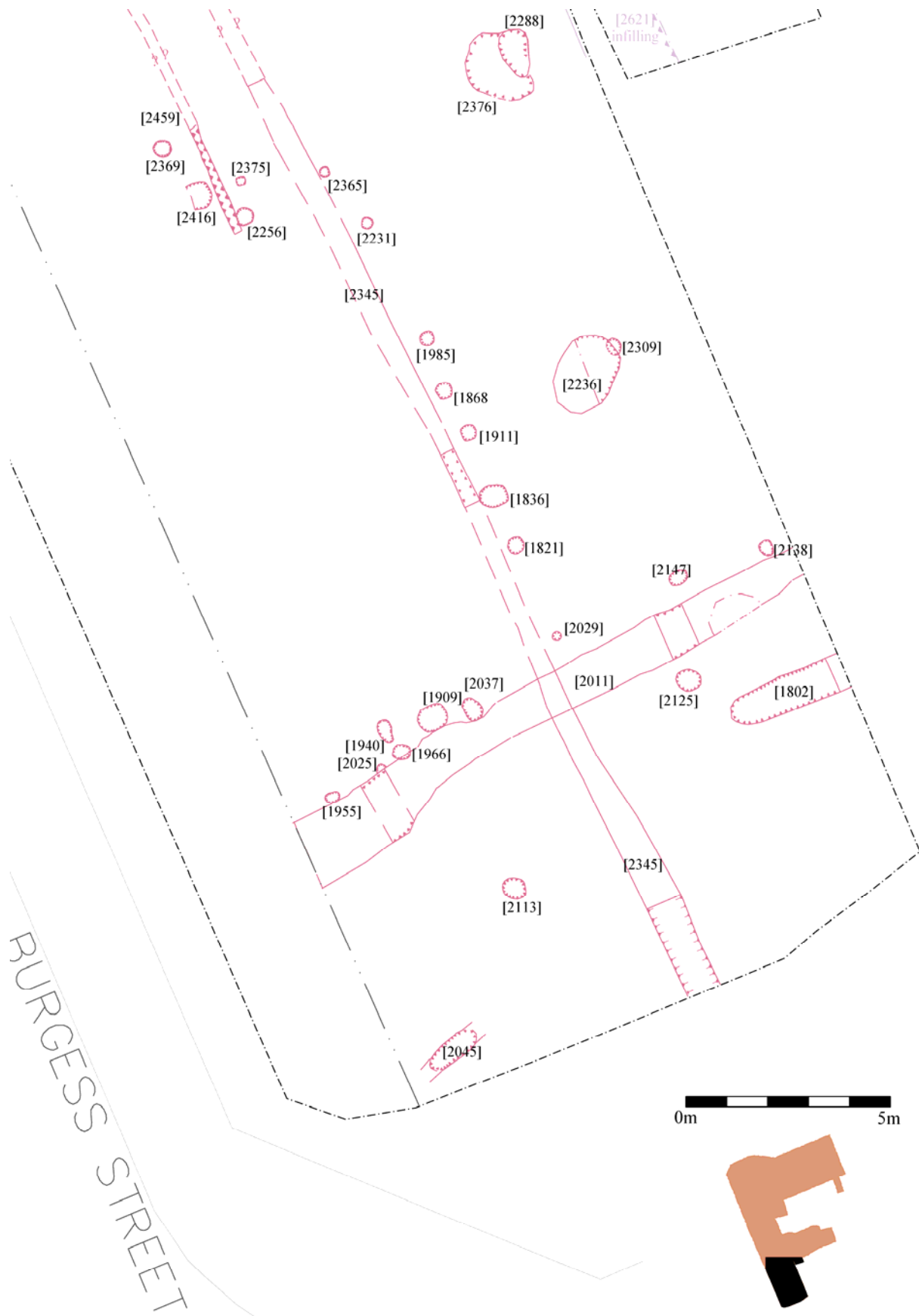


Fig. 21 Phase 2b feature contexts, south area.

Phase 2c *Insula V* (mid-late 2nd century AD)

Fig. 15, Fig. 23, Fig. 24

Cross-street (2408 etc.)

Pit [2242], post-holes [2276][2379][2490], hearth (2277)(2280)

Ditches [1734]

North-south street: (1040 etc.)

Boundary ditch [2385] and Post-line c: post-holes [2395][2800][2865][2833]

Pits [989][2880][2412]

Layers (917 etc.)

Yard surface (986 etc.)

Stone-lined well [1948]

Building C [1811](994)(2167) [2095] [964]

Post-line d: post- and stake-holes [2272][2332][2457][2330][2192][2190][2534][2536][2572] [2579]

Pits [2442][2452]

Post-line e: post-holes [1861][1904][1891][2307][1845][1848]

Ditch [724]

From the mid-2nd century AD, significant changes occurred across site, with more substantial masonry buildings surrounded by extensive yards emerging in *insula V* (Fig. 24). Further to the north, the line of the east-west cross-street was resurfaced (contexts 2408 etc.) indicating that the earlier linear features were disused. Despite this reinstatement, the line of the cross-street was however truncated in places by a scatter of pits and post-holes ([2276][2379][2490][2242]) which produced small quantities of pottery of early 2nd-century AD date, and an extensive area of burnt clay, stone and charcoal, presumably a hearth (2277) (2280), rested in a shallow scoop in its surface. This cross-street was eventually formed from a series of metallised layers and measured approximately *c.* 6.5m wide and more than *c.* 19m long, and had an ephemeral kerb consisting of a band of larger cobbles (2362) located along the southern edge.

The earlier ditch [2621] (Phase 2a) along the western side of the north-south street was re-cut slightly further to the east before the mid-2nd century AD, giving a deep V-shaped profile [1734], and measuring approximately 1.7m wide and up to 1.1m deep (Fig. 25, Fig. 26). This could be traced across the site and for at least 19m, following the line of the now metallised north-south street surface and was found to contain sherds of mid-2nd century pottery, in addition to a residual sherd of transitional pottery. A short section of ditch on a matching alignment to the west roadside ditch [1734] was excavated *c.* 45m away, far to the north and beyond the later town ditches (Fig. 23). This may represent part of a continuous ditch which ran beneath the line of the later town defences. Significantly, four layers of metallised surface on the street line were identified beneath the later town rampart. This shows that the north-south street also continued some way north, but when the defences were set out, it was shortened in length and some reordering and consolidation of the town plan took place here. While it is likely that there was also an east roadside ditch in *insula VI* at this date, this could not be proved. Ditches [3050] and [3097] although on the correct alignment could not be shown to have been open at this date, but this might be due to an absence of occupation material in this *insula* to indicate such a date (see below).

The initial metallising surface on the north-south street line (1040 etc.) rested above a preserved turf-line, and the latest metallised street surface (2479) was *c.* 4.2m wide (Fig. 25), closely comparable to the nearby Vine St site (Higgins et al. 2009). Whilst little dateable material was recovered, with just two sherds of late 1st to early 2nd century Samian from the compacted gravel metallising, some erosion of the street surface had certainly occurred by the mid 2nd century, with metallising slumping into the roadside ditch [1734]. Following some silting up of this ditch, metallising was laid over this partly infilled boundary, probably indicating that the cross-street would have connected with the main N-S street, although a stratigraphic relationship could not be established due to later truncation.

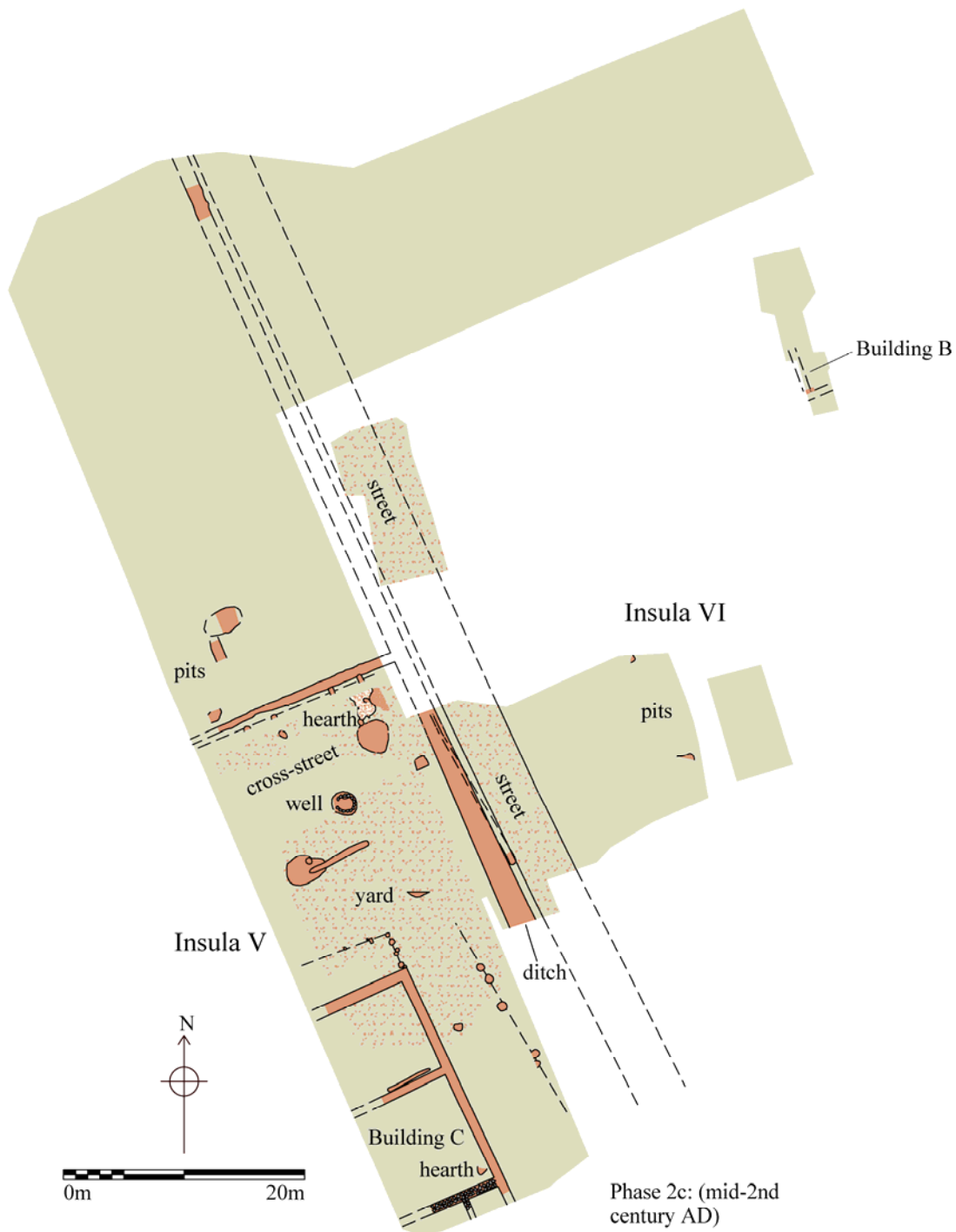


Fig. 22 Phase 2c (mid-late 2nd century), interpretive plan.

The northern edge of the cross-street surface was perhaps defined by a boundary ditch [2385], which was maintained as a boundary line from the 2nd and into the 3rd century (Fig. 15). Ditch [2385] was aligned east/west, measuring 0.87m wide and up to 0.6m deep and running for 16m across the full width of the site, possibly joining the western street ditch [1734] at right-angles, although the junction point would have occurred beyond the area of excavation. Finds recovered from the backfills included large quantities of pottery, a copper-alloy spoon bowl and fragments of blue/green vessel glass, suggesting that the ditch fell out of use during the mid-2nd century AD, although the boundary line would continue to be marked by a substantial stone wall and larger ditch during later phases. Immediately to the south of the ditch, a line of four, sizeable post-holes, measuring up to 0.63 across and 0.5m deep, spaced approximately 2.5m apart, appear to be structural and may represent the remains of a fence (**Post-line c**).

Evidence for occupation in the area to the north of ditch [2385] was scant, and further north totally absent due to truncation by the town wall and defensive ditches. The surviving evidence was fragmentary, consisting solely of pits [989][2412][2880], but these yielded good assemblages of finds dating to the early-mid 2nd century AD, suggesting rapid, deliberate infilling, and were possibly dug for the disposal of domestic waste. Pit [989] contained within its various fills, a slumped layer of cobbles, apparently representing the remains of a metallised surface which did not survive elsewhere. The pits were sealed by a layer of soil (917 etc.), which appears to have been deliberately spread across the area, as part of the levelling undertaken prior to the construction of the town's ramparts in the later 2nd century.

Towards the southern part of the site and located approximately 10m to the west of the main N-S street, were the truncated remains of the north-east corner of a substantial building (**Building C**, Fig. 24), represented by robber trenches measuring 0.78m wide by 0.2m deep, with wall footings [1811] comprising clay-bonded, granodiorite rubble. It consisted of a range of at least four rooms running parallel with the main north-south street, measuring at least 21.3m long and over 6.2m wide, running beyond the western site boundary. It is not clear therefore, whether the remains represent the complete footprint of a structure similar to the strip building recorded during the excavations on Vine Street to the south-west, or whether this was the east wing of a larger, courtyard-style building that stretched beyond the limits of the excavation. The building had two larger rooms, *c.*9m by at least 6m, and at the south two smaller rooms, at least 2.8m by more than 1.5m. The latter rooms were probably originally one room divided later, as the internal wall was of a narrower build than the others. Little evidence survived for the date of construction of this building – just two sherds of late 1st- to early 2nd-century pottery were found in the footings, whilst early to mid-2nd-century pottery was recovered from gravel floor make-ups (994) (2167) in the northern room. Two internal features may be contemporary with the building, including a small tile-lined hearth [2095] in the central room and a gully [964] running parallel against the internal wall in the northern room. The probable strip-building in *insula V* may be related to a closely comparable structure on the adjacent Vine Street site (Higgins et al. 2009), perhaps indicating a larger range of buildings.

Immediately to the north of the building, was a group of eight post-holes (**Post-line d**), arranged in an L-shaped formation, representing the remains of a structure which projected *c.*3.3m from the northern end wall of **Building C** before turning west to run parallel with it for 3.8m. The post-holes produced no dateable pottery and it is unclear whether they represent a timber extension to the building or perhaps a timber structure pre-dating it. The latter interpretation may be more likely as, where relationships could be determined, the post-holes appeared to be sealed by an extensive metallised 'yard' surface (986 etc.) located on the northern side of the building. Close to **Post-line d**, were two small, intercutting pits [2442] and [2452], which produced no dating evidence. On the eastern side of **Building C**, running parallel with both the eastern wall and the main N-S street, was a second linear group of five post-holes (**Post-line e**) also containing mid-2nd-century pottery, with a sixth post-hole to the west creating a right-angled intersection along the line. This group appears also to represent the remains of a timber structure, constructed up against **Building C** and fronting onto the main street.

The yard surfaces (986 etc.) located to the north of **Building C** covered an area measuring *c.*21m by *c.*14m, but had clearly been truncated at their northern and southern extents. Large quantities of mid-2nd-century pottery were incorporated within its make-up. A number of features were observed to have been cut into the surface of the yard, including a large pit [2680] containing mid-late 2nd-century pottery, which was in turn cut by gully [2556] and post-hole [2610], which may represent the remains of another ephemeral structure. Some 2.5m further to the north was a stone-lined well [1948]. This measured *c.*2m in diameter and was lined with granite rubble to leave a *c.*0.84m diameter shaft. Pottery from the construction material was inconclusive but it had become backfilled with soil and rubble containing mid-late 2nd-century material. Further cut features suggest later activity in the yard area, which appears to have continued into the 3rd century.

Phase 2c *Insula VI*

Fig. 28

Building B (634) (637) (675)

Ditch [724]?

Very little evidence for 2nd-century activity survived within the small area seen of *insula VI*. One feature of note was part of a building (**Building B**) in the north-east corner of the site. This was a right-angled fragment of clay wall representing the internal south-west corner of a structure (Fig. 28). The wall line only survived for *c.*0.4m east-to-west and for *c.*0.25m north-to-south, with a standing height of *c.*0.35m,

but still bore painted wall plaster on its northern 'internal' face (634, 637). Associated contexts (including a fragment of a possible tiled floor surface, context (675)), produced twenty sherds of mid-2nd century pottery. The structure appears to have been levelled in advance of the construction of the town defences and the remains were sealed beneath the up-cast earth of the town rampart. The structure is intriguing evidence for an ephemeral building though clearly of some status as indicated by the painted wall plaster, and from rampart levels were concentrations of further dumped painted wall plaster.

Around 7.9m to the north was the base of a steep, V-shaped ditch [724] on a parallel line with the slightly later defences. This could be an early ditch demarcating the town boundary or *pomerium*, but it might be later 2nd century and associated with the timber defences. Its fills produced a single sherd of 2nd century pottery. Adjacent to *insula* V to the west, the ditch features to the east of the north-south street (1040 etc.) suggest silting and probably vegetative growth adding to the suggestions of a virtually unoccupied area. Likewise, late 1st or early 2nd century pit [3136], though probably already infilled had no material of this date in the later slumping deposits.

Discussion of Phase 2

The early alignments on site pre-date the accepted establishment of the town-wide street grid and taken with other evidence it is now clear that it must have been well established possibly as early as the mid-late 1st century AD. However considering the form of these features it is possible they may actually also represent the line of an earlier town boundary, in the form of a palisade and fronting ditches and incorporated into the town plan when the insulae were laid out. The native style activity might hint at vicus occupation 'outside' the main area of Roman settlement. It can be suggested that the main street is relatively early too. The presence of substantial buildings in insulae V and VI by the mid 2nd century shows that the north-east quarter had some significant development comparatively early in the Roman period. The probable strip-building in insula V may be related to a closely comparable structure on the adjacent Vine Street site, perhaps indicating a larger range of buildings.

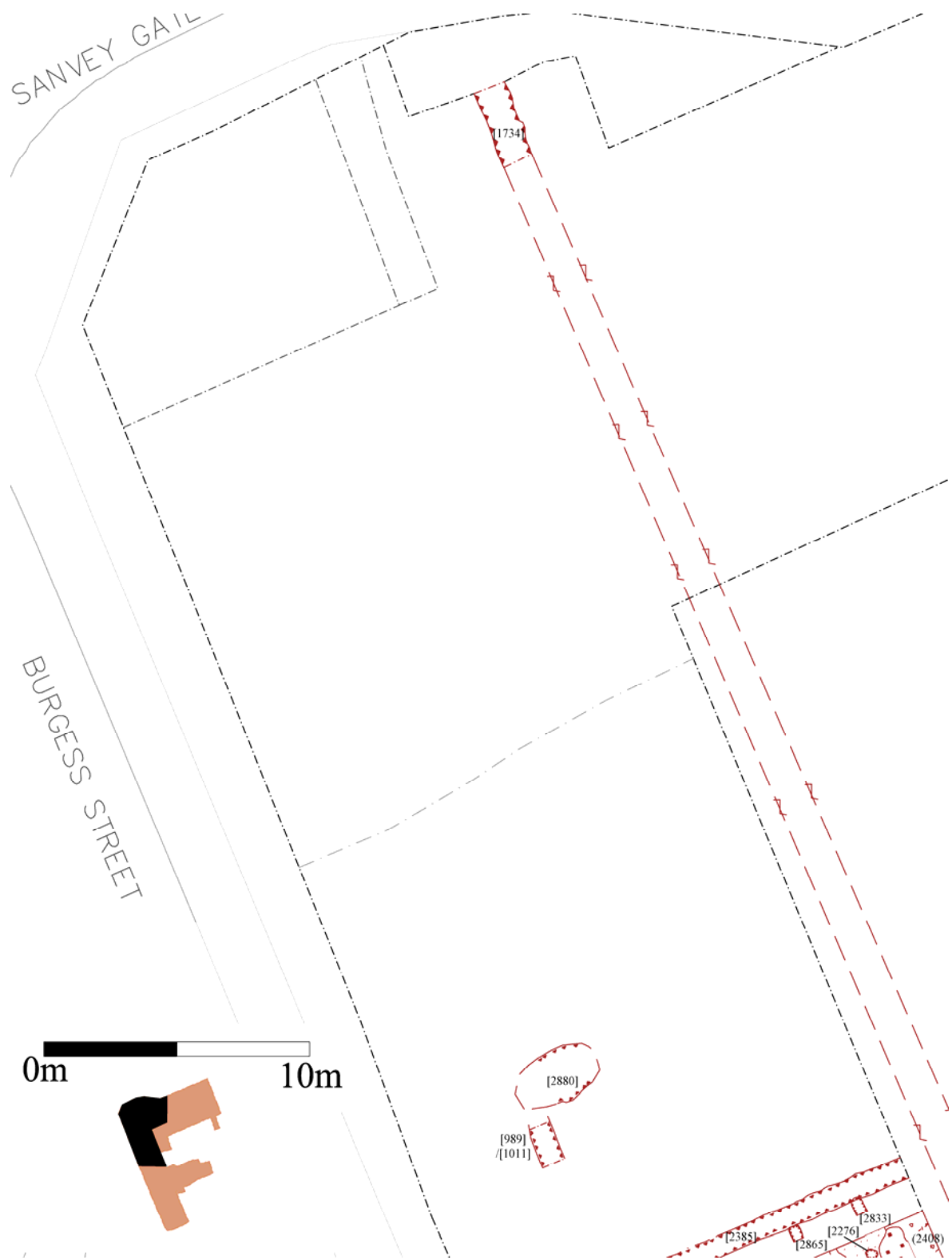


Fig. 23 Phase 2c feature contexts, north area (Sanvey frontage/Burgess St).

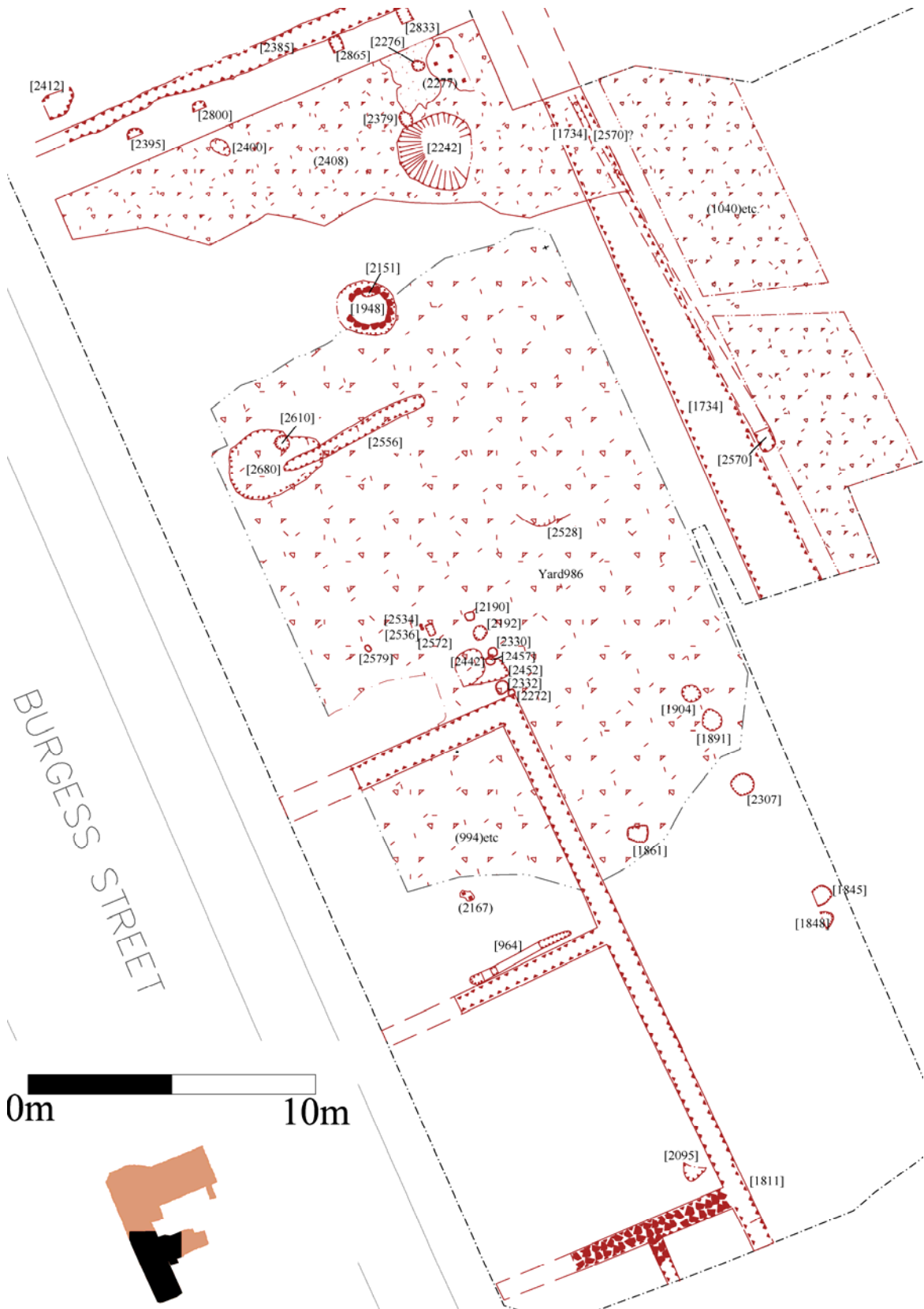


Fig. 24 Phase 2c feature contexts, south area Burgess St/Junior St.



Fig. 25 North-south street metalling surviving, and to west (far left) roadside ditch [1734]. Between these, line of the west roadside wall ([2576], robbed as [1037])....



Fig. 26 Line of the west roadside wall ([2576], robbed as [1037]), foreground. Then Ditches [1734] (centre), and [2621] at left (west).

PHASE 3: THE EARLIER TOWN DEFENCES, AND MID-ROMAN ACTIVITY (LATE 2ND AND 3RD CENTURY AD)

Fig. 28 - Fig. 46

Summary of Phase 3

The town defences were most likely first set out during the late 2nd century, consisting of two or more ditches that may have seasonally held standing water, and on varying lines over time. Behind these ditches an earth and turf rampart, probably timber strapped, was constructed. The town defences were added to most likely in the 3rd century with a wide masonry wall. These defences were all clearly imposed over earlier activity. Behind the defences, a unique set of features was identified, a large ditch backed with a parallel wall demarcating the defensive area from the civil insulae. The main north-south street was enhanced with roadside walls, but the strip building in insula V may have been disused and perhaps even demolished by the second half of the 3rd century. In insula VI a large stone-founded building, possibly of a high-status courtyard-type, was constructed probably in the early 3rd century.

Phase 3a (late 2nd century AD)

The Initial Town Defences

Fig. 28 - Fig. 36, Fig. 45

Town ditches - Inner ditch [1648] etc. Outer ditches [1428]=[1477] etc.

Rampart Layers (555 etc.)

Rampart Structures [629] [707] [724]?

Evidence of the town's defences was revealed across the northern half of site. The defences initially consisted of earth, turf and probably timber fortifications, and were fronted by large, parallel ditches. The latter could be traced for the length of the site (east-west, 120m). In the north-east corner of the site it was confirmed that the defences turned to head back south (on the line of modern Churchgate; Fig. 32), and in the west they continued beyond the site area and parallel to Long Lane. Any trace of a possible north-east angle tower would have been removed by the late Victorian Sanvey Mill. Due to later recutting it is difficult to identify with certainty the exact original form of the Roman ditches (Fig. 45). The full sequence of the Roman ditches consisted of two or more likely three steep-sided ditches and this sequence was in total c.22m wide. The town ditches were cut as deep as c.3.3m below the Roman ground level. It cannot be said if the three ditches were contemporary or were recuts in slightly different positions, but from other parallels the latter is more likely.

Dating the ditches is problematic because they would have been regularly cleaned out through the Roman period. Any material recovered from their fills can only reflect an earliest date when they began to fill up. However, at the bottom of the ditches were waterlogged silts which contained a high degree of organic preservation including wood fragments, worked timbers, leather and plant material. One of the early ditches had material suitable for samples and this produced a C14 date from the base of 1780+/-30BP (130-340AD, 95.4% prob., Ua40155). This result shows that one or more of the town ditches was open from perhaps the 2nd century, and was maintained as an open feature through into the early medieval period judging by the other C14 results (see below).

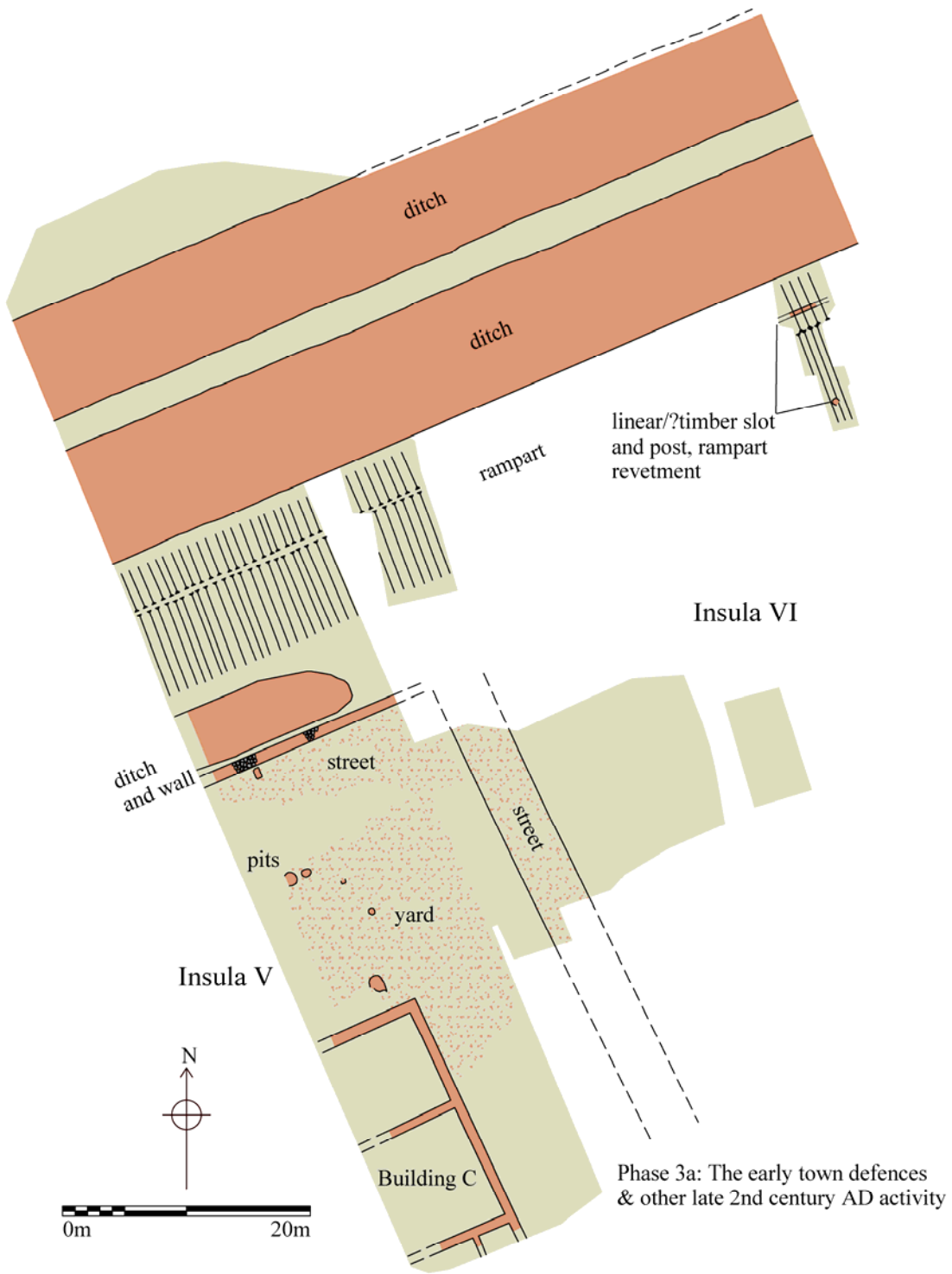


Fig. 27 Phase 3a (late 2nd century), interpretive plan.

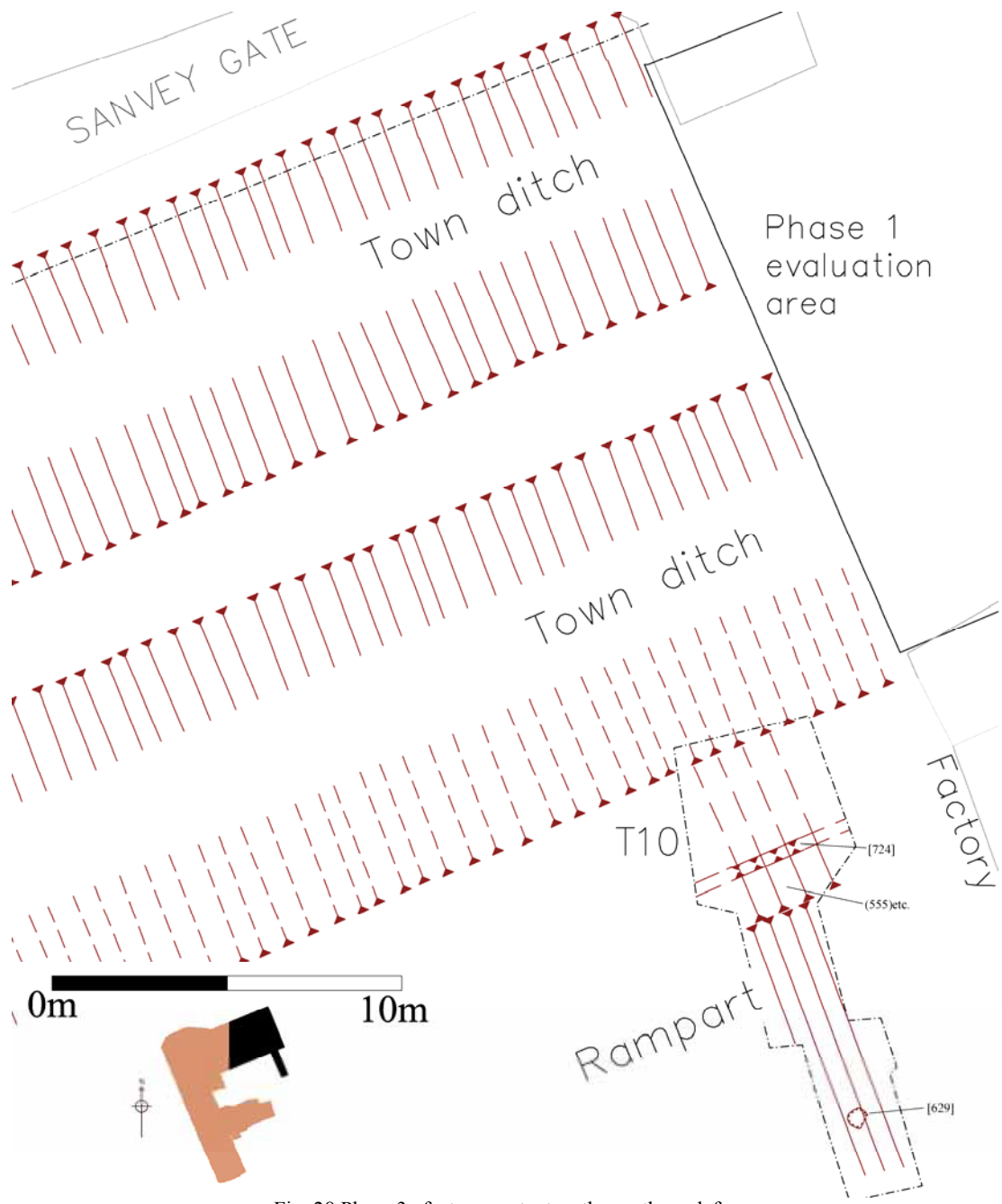


Fig. 28 Phase 3a feature contexts – the northern defences.

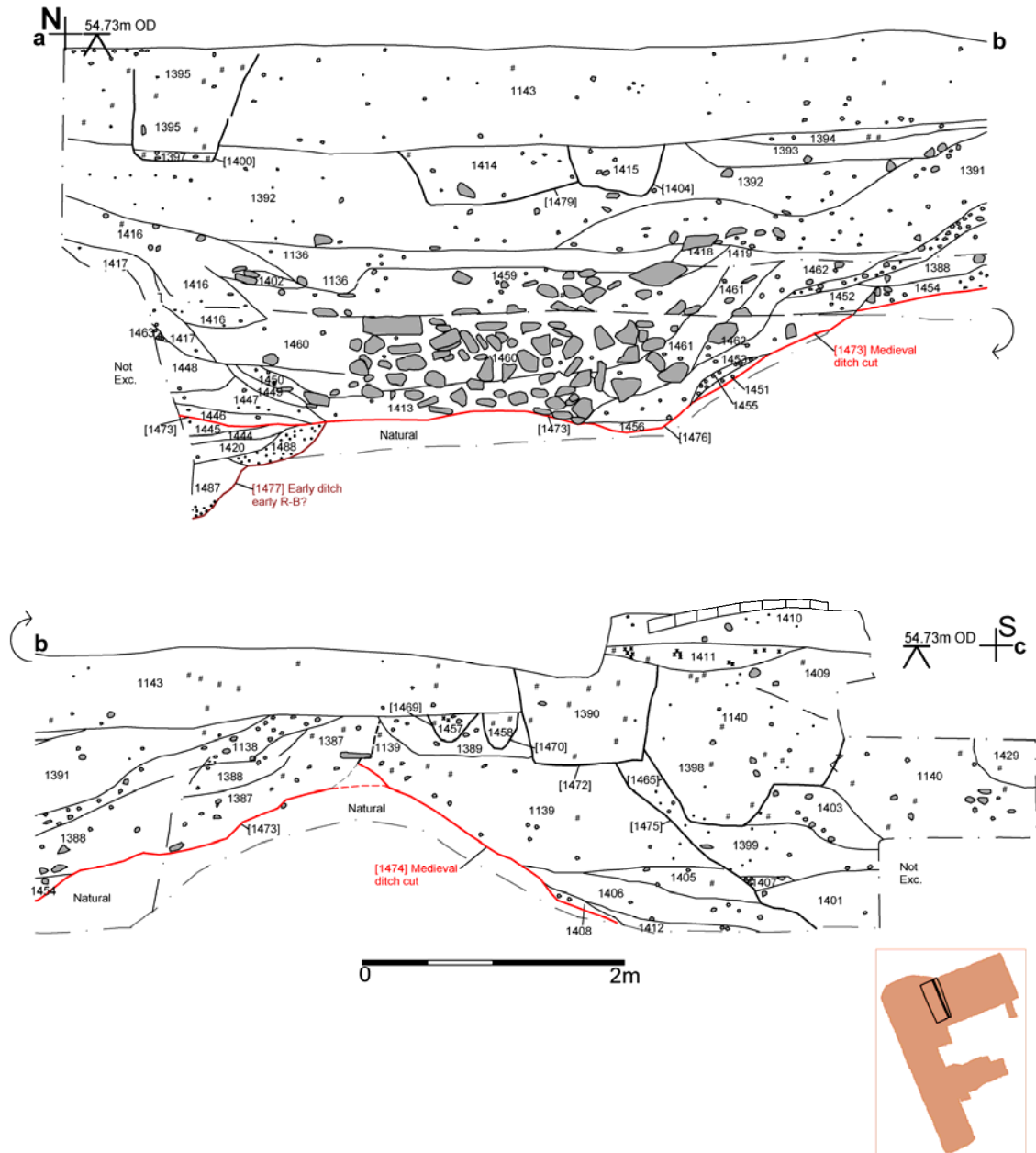


Fig. 29 Town ditch section (Trench 19).

To the south of the line of the town ditches was sited the rampart, which survived in areas to a height of *c.*1.6m (Fig. 36). Rampart material (555 etc.) could be observed to a breadth of *c.*8.3m in the main area excavations, though the lower slopes were somewhat truncated and perhaps did not represent the rampart's true edges. In the north-eastern part of the site, where truncation was at a minimum, the full breadth of the rampart was recorded to be 10.35m. This breadth compares well with the width of the rampart observed during excavations of the eastern defences on Butt Close Lane where it was recorded to be *c.*8.8m (Buckley and Lucas 1987, 53). In the west end of site, rampart-like deposits were also noted slumping into features *c.*9.5m south of the town wall line, suggesting a failure torevet the tail of the rampart properly.

The material used in the construction of the rampart varied greatly across the length and breadth of the earthwork, with some domestic refuse and demolition material incorporated into the numerous layers, reflecting the previous phases of occupation in the area. Most of the make-up however, consisted of natural loamy sand and clay, probably upcast from the excavation of the ditches located to the north, but with some ephemeral remains of cut turves recorded. Dating the construction of the rampart is also somewhat problematic because any material recovered from its make-up is more or less residual in origin. The bulk of the pottery recovered from the excavations was of mid- to late 2nd century origin and,

combined with evidence of mid-2nd century buildings beneath the rampart, it allows for a broad *terminus post quem* of the late 2nd century.



Fig. 30 The town ditches, as seen adjacent to Burgess Street (left). Looking north-west, with the inner town ditch (foreground), a clear berm, and the outer ditch (background). Small area of frontage activity just beyond this.



Fig. 31 The town ditches cont'd., centre of Sanvey Gate frontage. Looking south-east, with the outer town ditch (foreground), a clear berm, and the inner ditch (background). Rubble backfilled outer ditch is clear here. Also the collapsed town wall can be seen at the back (south end of trench). The orange fencing is broadly on the original line of the town wall.



Fig. 32 The town ditches cont'd., adjacent to St. Margaret's Way. The rubble backfill on the inner edge of the (outer) town ditch can be seen, and the turn of the defences as they begin (to the right) to head southwards into town. Taken from Mosan Mills (north at top).

There is some evidence for revetment structures associated with the rampart. No definite evidence for a frontal timber palisade was found however as its alignment was probably truncated by the subsequent construction of the masonry town wall. Feature [724] was a narrow V-shaped linear cut, on the same alignment as and predating the probable Phase 3c town wall. It is possible that this feature might have had a structural function as a post-slot, and it can be compared to two similar features seen on the southern defences at Magazine Walk (*ibid.*, 17). Next to this, [707] was a 1m-long stretch of a linear feature with charring preserved possibly indicating timber strapping, and also associated with turf layers for the rampart build up. A further 6m to the south, towards the tail of the rampart, post-hole [629] was 0.6m in diameter and 0.45m deep (Fig. 28), and produced 4 sherds of mid-2nd century pottery.

Extra-mural Activity

Beyond the town ditches, a small area of extra-mural 'suburban' ground produced no evidence of activity post-defences, this absence of activity being paralleled further along the line of the defences (Finn 1993, Abrams 2003).

Intra-mural Features (Insula V only)

Fig. 15, Fig. 33 - Fig. 34

Wall [2523]

Ditch [1774]

Cross-street: surfaces (2154 etc.) kerb (2362)

Yard surface (2402 etc.)

Pits [2348] [2449]

Post-holes [2041][2382][2384][2562]

The 2nd-century boundary ditch [2385] to the north of the east/west cross street (2154) appears at this point to have been backed by a substantial granite wall [2523], replacing the earlier fence-line, on the same east/west alignment and running parallel with the town defences. This had a large foundation trench measuring 0.85m wide and surviving to 0.7m deep, with pitched granodiorite footings still surviving in places and sherds of 2nd-century pottery found amongst them (Fig. 15 – Fig. 17). The cross-wall ran for 16m across the full width of the excavated area, with no discernable break in the footing. Whilst its

function is unknown, it seems likely that it served as a boundary to distinguish between the municipal/military and private zones within the urban landscape. It is not clear, however, whether the wall continued further to the east, truncating the main north/south street and effectively blocking access to the ramparts. Similar walls noted on sites elsewhere within the town, particularly on Sites 1 and 3, which are located away from the town defences, have been interpreted solely as property boundaries. The foundations here do appear relatively substantial for a normal boundary wall however, perhaps suggesting 'civic' influence (Fig. 17).



Fig. 33 Phase 3a intra-mural feature contexts, main area (insula V).

To the north of the wall and also running parallel along the edge of the town defences, was a wide ditch [1774] (Fig. 33). This could be observed for c.13m, terminating at its eastern end but continuing beyond the excavation to the west, a larger recut of [2385]. Pottery from the primary fills spanned the whole of the 2nd century. Pottery dating from the 3rd and 4th centuries came from the uppermost fills which included slumped rampart material indicating that the ditch remained open for a considerable period. As with wall [2523], it seems possible that the ditch served as a means of separating the municipal town defences and the private properties in adjacent *insulae*. It would have also served a practical purpose, providing drainage from both of its sides.

On the southern side of the cross-wall, the cross-street was resurfaced (2154) and provided with a rather ephemeral kerb (2362). In this phase it was cut by a small rectangular pit [2348], measuring 0.8m long by 0.45m wide and 0.2m deep which contained 2nd-century pottery in its fill, the latter an unusual mix of fine gravel set in a matrix of clay, perhaps an attempt to consolidate the pit and maintain a metallised surface.

In the late 2nd century the earlier yard surface in the south of site was maintained (2402 etc.), but close to **Building C** the surface was in turn cut by pit [2449] and a group of post-holes. Pit [2449] was 1.38m north-south by 1.19m east-west, shallow at only 0.18m deep. The group of post-holes included [2041], [2384], [2562] and possibly [2382]. The three post-holes were in a south-east to north-west line, or an arc including possible post-hole [2382]. The three post-holes measured up to 0.75m in diameter, 0.36m in depth and produced eight sherds of probable mid-2nd century pottery. Feature [2382] is perhaps of a later

date, and although very shallow it produced 14 sherds of 3rd century pottery and one intrusive sherd of medieval date.

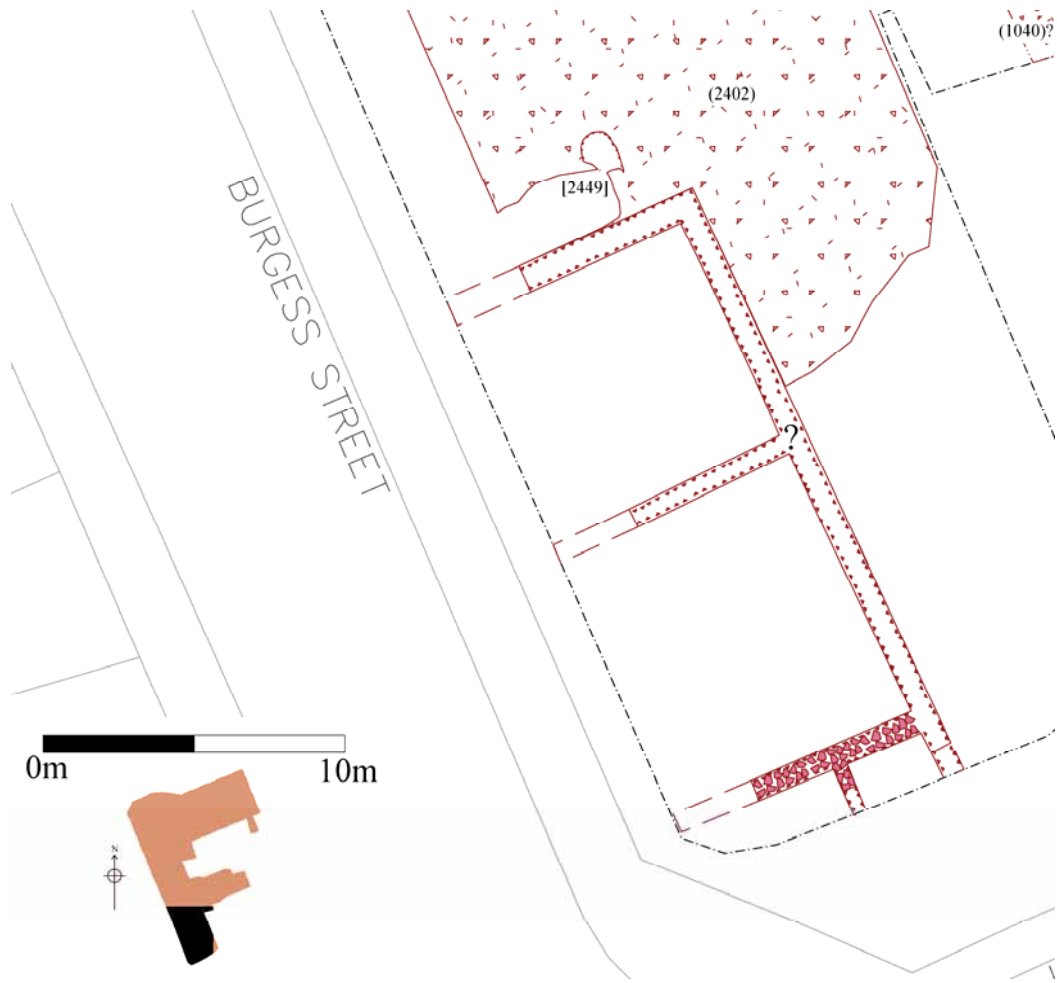


Fig. 34 Phase 3a intra-mural feature contexts, south area (insula V).

Phase 3b (early-mid 3rd century AD)

The Town Defences

Fig. 28, Fig. 35, Fig. 36

Rampart Structures [623] [2301] [2228]

Town ditches

Little direct evidence for maintenance of the defences was forthcoming in this phase. Post-hole [623] produced 3rd-century material, replaced the earlier post-hole [629] at the tail of the rampart and was probably for revetment of the rampart (Fig. 28, Fig. 36). A further *c.*4.5 metres south of the surviving rampart tail, another post-hole [2301] was recorded. This was later recut by feature [2228], a probable recut post-hole of similar shape and perhaps related, although these are perhaps too far from the main bulk of the rampart to have acted as a revetment.

It is highly likely that the town ditches were cleaned out at intervals. A wide flat bottomed outer town ditch (cut [1443], see below) of probable Phase 4 date would have truncated any evidence for fills of this phase that may have survived in the upper reaches of earlier cuts. The main inner town ditch may also have been maintained but no trace survived of this due to further recutting in the medieval period.

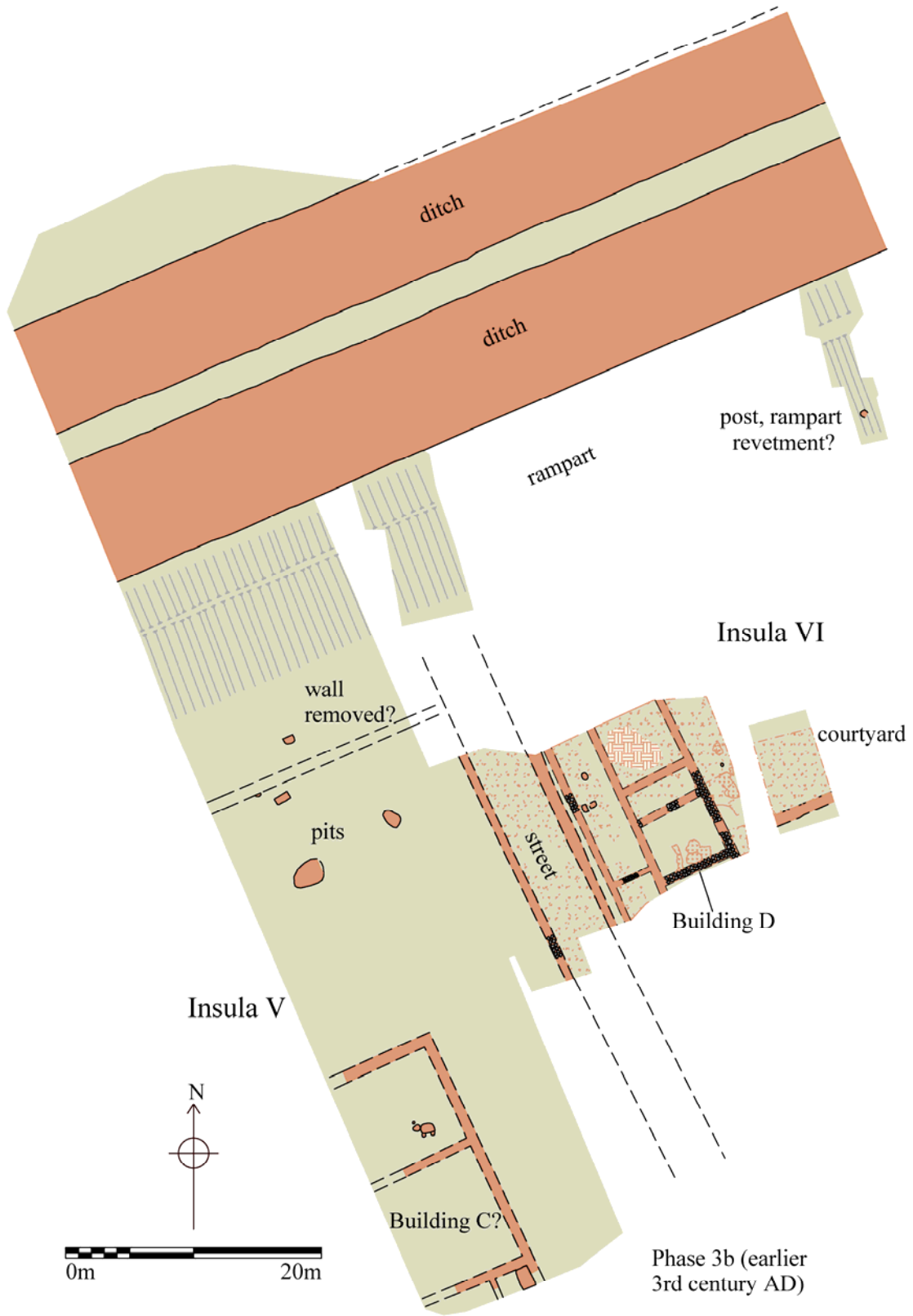


Fig. 35 Phase 3b (early-mid 3rd century), interpretive plan.

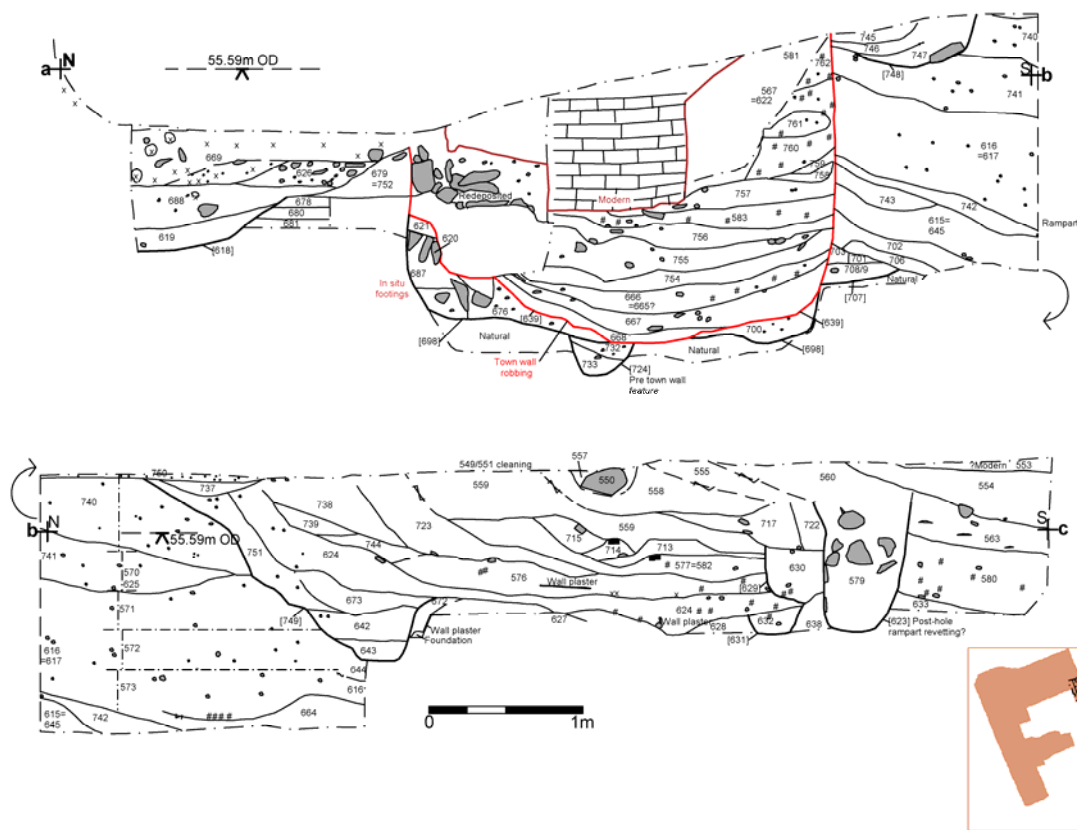


Fig. 36 Rampart section, and town wall features, trench 10.

Insula V

Fig. 37 - Fig. 39

- West roadside wall [2576]
- ?Levelling and possible removal of east-west wall [2168]
- Post-holes [2136][2185][2069][2183] ?[2116]
- Pits [2166] [2315] [2612] [2666]
- Feature ?[2257]

During the 3rd century, boundary walls were added to the east and west sides of the north-south street. On the western side, wall [2576] survived as two courses of granite blocks, bonded with a silty sand matrix. Beyond the edge of the excavation area, the line of wall [2576] if projected northwards would have met the projected line of east/west cross-street wall [2523], representing perhaps a property boundary within the north-eastern corner of *insula V*. Two robbing events were identified for wall-line [2523], with the early event [2168] clearing only the superstructure and part of the footings, and only producing material of 3rd-century date. There is the possibility therefore that this boundary wall may have been levelled at some point during the 3rd century.

A dispersed scatter of pits and post-holes dug into the surface of the east/west cross street may be dated to the earlier 3rd century (Phase 3b) as they produced only 3rd century material (Fig. 37). A rectangular pit [2315], measuring 1.17m long by 0.6m wide and 0.5m deep, produced copper-alloy slag and ‘metallic’ staining from its fill, indicating industrial activity in the vicinity. Feature [2257] just west of this may have been associated or related to removal of wall [2523]. East of these features was a further shallow pit [2612], and to the south another pit [2666] containing burnt material, appeared to indicate the remains of domestic refuse.

Through the 3rd century, evidence of continued occupation of **Building C** in particular becomes increasingly hard to establish. In the building’s north room a small group of post-holes [2136] [2185][2069] and [2183], formed an L-shaped arrangement around a larger post-hole or pit [2116], (Fig.

38). All produced 3rd century pottery from their backfills but the absence of any associated floor surfaces makes it difficult to determine whether they could be related to activity inside the building. The only other feature inside **Building C** was a square-cut pit [2166] located in the corner of the south-eastern room, respecting the wall-lines but containing demolition rubble including ceramic roofing tiles, roof slates, fragments of mortar flooring and granite rubble (presumably walling material), along with 3rd century pottery. This may suggest that the building was in decline during the 3rd century and may even have been demolished at this time, but the depth of horizontal truncation across this part of the site makes it impossible to establish this conclusively. Demolition of comparable structures is recorded at the adjacent Vine Street site, prior to changes in land-use within this *insula* (Higgins et al. 2009). A similar pit full of demolition is sited just to the north of **Building C**, but is dated to Phase 3c by its finds (cut [1018], see below). It is perhaps possible that Phase 3b pit [2166] is slightly later too.

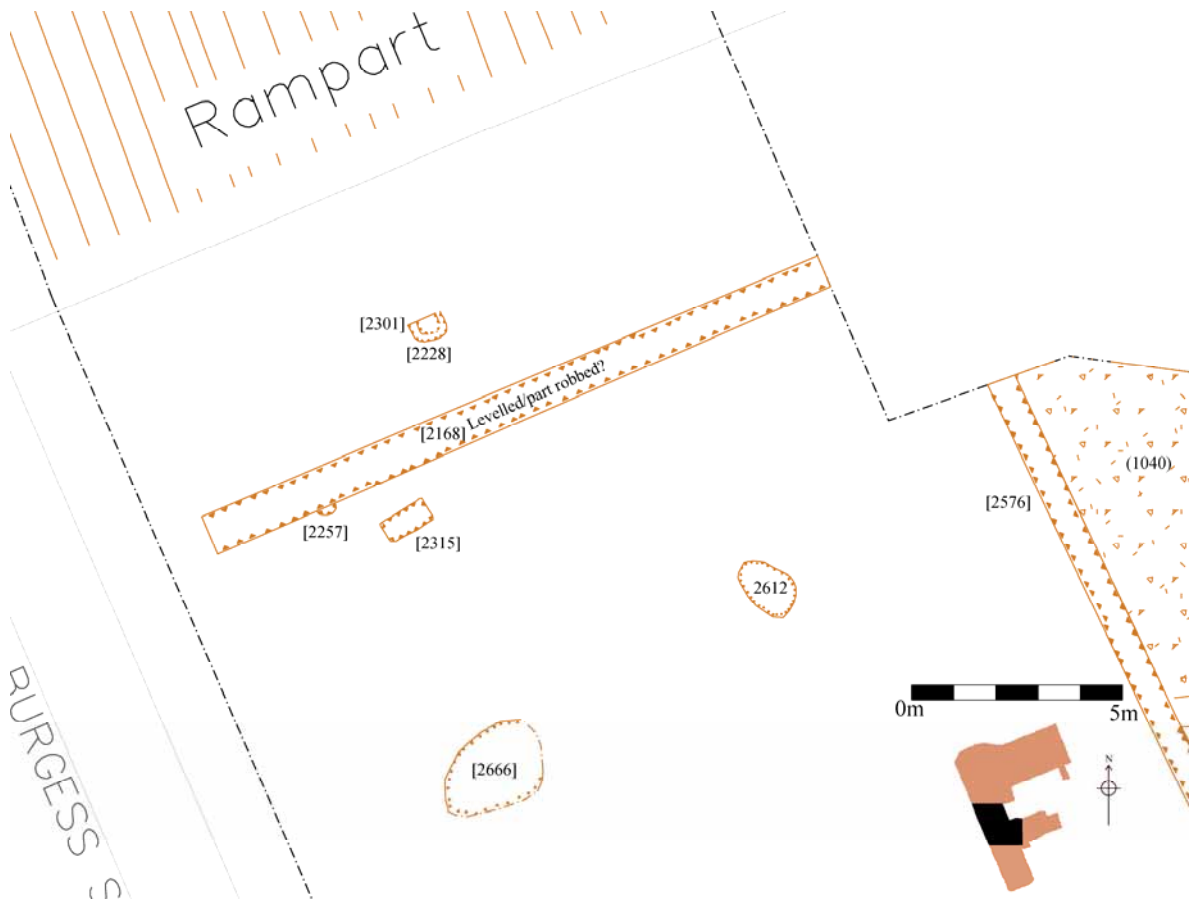


Fig. 37 Phase 3b feature contexts, main area (insula V).

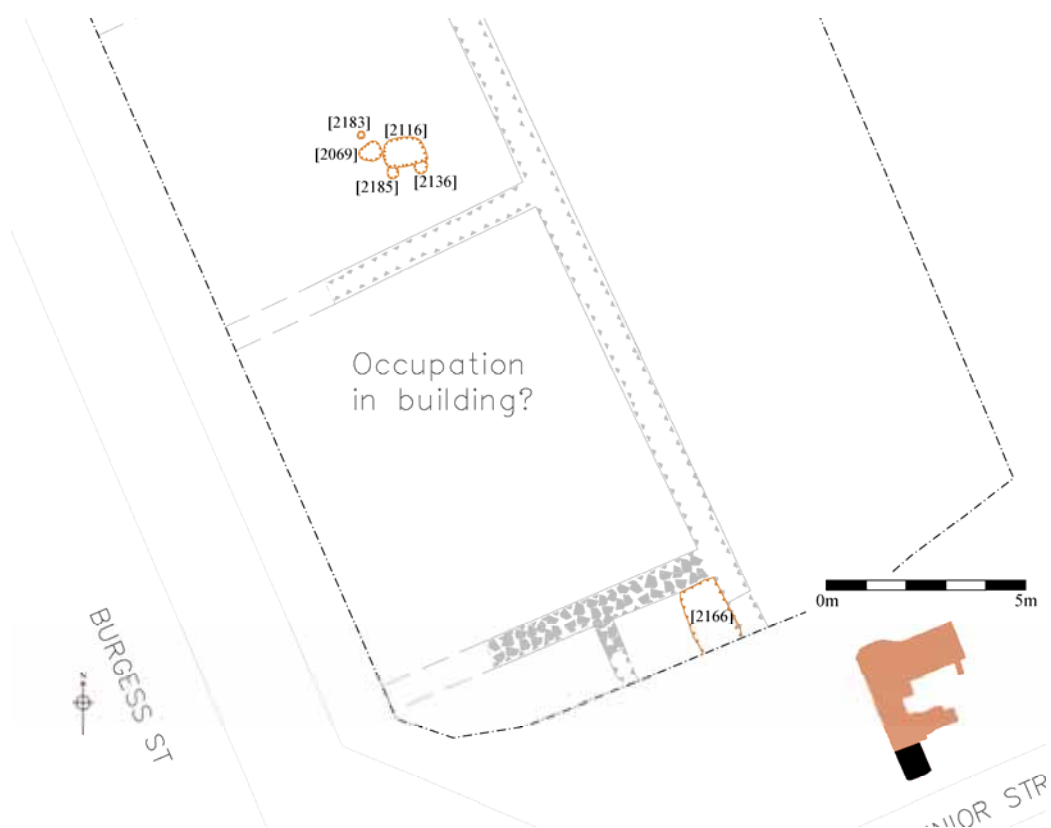


Fig. 38 Phase 3b feature contexts, south area (insula V).

Insula VI

Fig. 39

East roadside walls [869][1065]

Building D [2994][1065](2930) (3042) (3071) (3073) (3074) Post-structures [3155] (3121) [3012] [3019] [3038]

Only a very small area of *insula VI* was exposed on site, east of the north-south street. However, despite the limited area substantial features were recorded including a masonry building. On the eastern side, two roadside wall-lines were identified, with an inner wall [869] restricting the width of the street to 4.2m if paired with wall [2576] to the west. A second wall-line [1065], also surviving as bonded granite footings, was located 0.5m to the east of wall-line [869] and may relate to **Building D** (below). It is actually unlikely that these two eastern walls were upstanding at the same time as they were so close.

Building D was situated immediately east of the street and these walls, and consisted of a range of at least four rooms running parallel with it (Fig. 39). The wall foundations [2994] measured 0.79m wide and 0.7m deep and appeared to have been extensively robbed during the medieval period. Where masonry did survive, the footings consisted of Charnian Granodiorite rubble, bonded with clay. The remains appear to represent the presence of a courtyard house, with the courtyard (2930) located on the eastern side, measuring at least 13.4m long by 9m wide. Structural remains cut into the yard surface, including post-hole [3155] and post-pad (3121) may indicate the former presence of a veranda or similar structure, with a robbed-out wall-line [2932] located to the south-east perhaps representing the courtyard boundary, with further rooms perhaps located beyond. To the west of the courtyard was a suite of at least four 'rooms', presenting in a linear arrangement.

The most southerly room was only partially exposed – most of it lying to the south of the excavation area. The second room to the north measured 5.4 east-west by 4.5m north-south, with some floor make ups surviving (3071 etc.). These contexts produced only residual 2nd century pottery. North of this was a narrow room – some 2m wide, most likely a corridor between the east courtyard and the portico-like structure to the west. The south wall of this 'corridor' looks very much like a later addition however as it does not run parallel to its neighbour. The north room was at least 5.2m north-south (the north wall was not seen within the excavation area), and 5.3m wide east-west. West of this range of rooms was a possible portico or similar (3042 etc.), consisting of a floored area measuring 3m wide and bounded to the west by

wall-line [1065]. Postpads [3012], [3019] and post-hole [3038] can also be associated with this 'portico'. A short cross-wall blocked this aisle at the south but the aisle continued northwards.

Only occasional sherds of 2nd century pottery were recovered from the initial construction sequence, but floor make ups in the north room slumping into the backfilled Phase 2 quarry pit (3136) produced 21 pottery sherds of 3rd century date. Due to post-Roman truncation, no later floor sequences or occupational deposits survived.

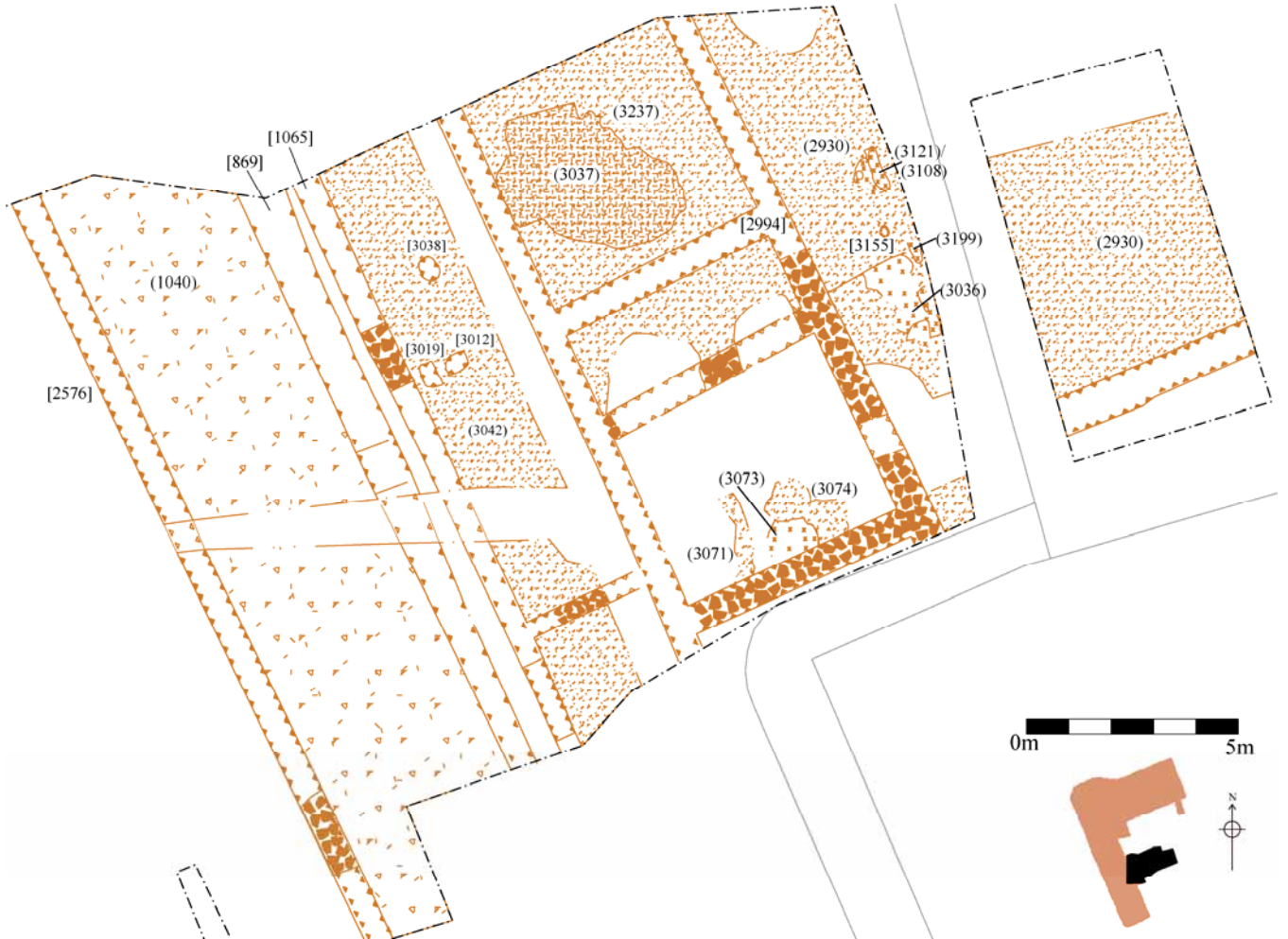


Fig. 39 Phase 3b feature contexts, east area (insula VI).

Phase 3c (later 3rd century AD)

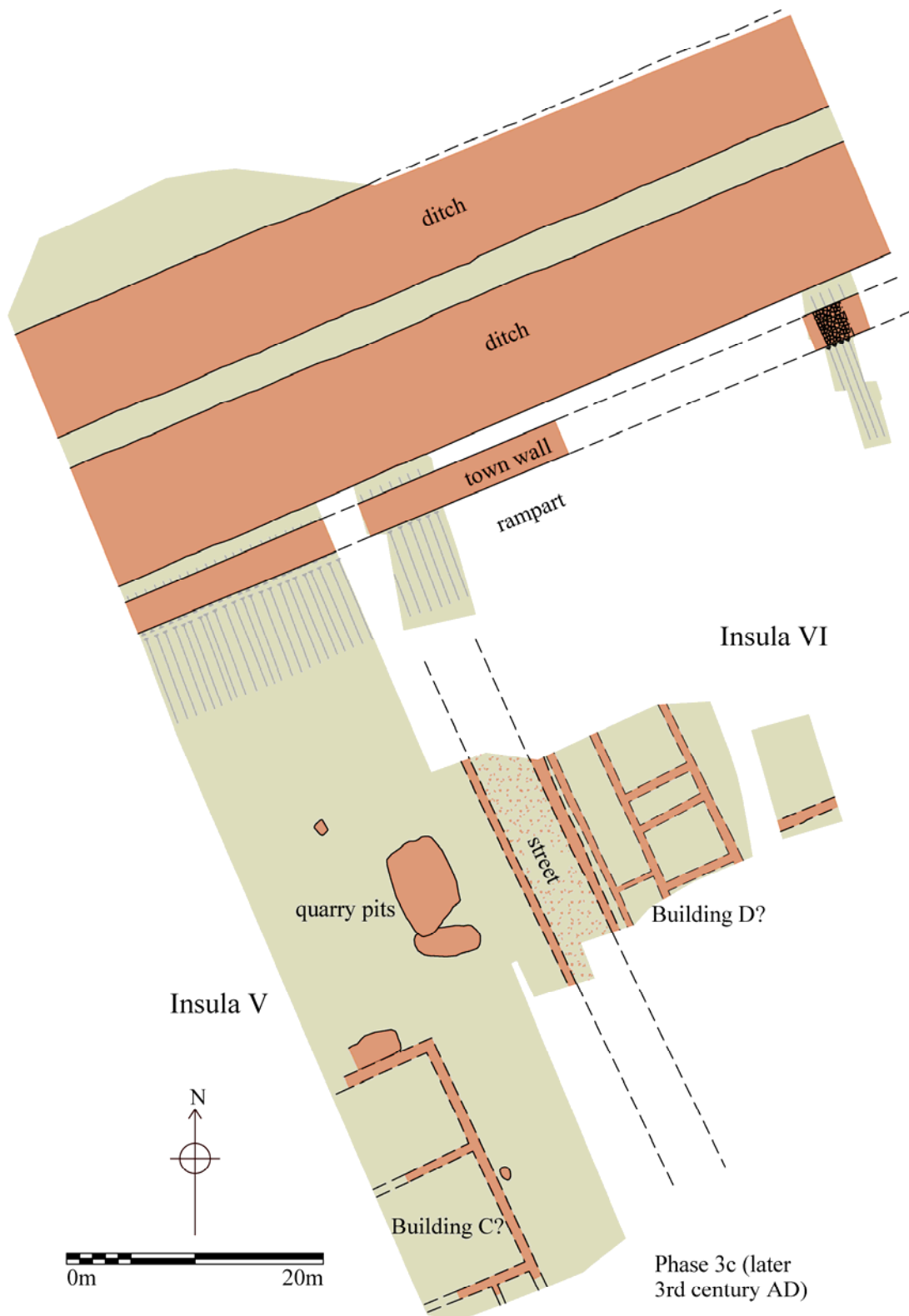


Fig. 40 Phase 3c (later 3rd century), interpretive plan.

The Town Defences

Fig. 28 - Fig. 32, Fig. 40 - Fig. 43, Fig. 45

Town Ditches

Town Wall [698]

There is evidence in other Roman towns for the replacement of steep-profiled town ditches with wider, more open U-shaped features in the later centuries of the Roman period. This is certainly the case on this site where the later re-cuts of the outer ditch became increasingly wide and flat-bottomed. The replacement of multiple ditches with a single feature sited further away from the wall-line is paralleled at other sites, and thought to be for tactical or structural purposes. At Roman London an alteration to the form of the ditches has been associated with the mid 3rd century addition of the bastions (Lyon 2007, 47). In Leicester, John Wacher identified in 1958 a stone 'apron' in front of the town wall at Elbow Lane (Wacher 1959) and suggested that it may have served as the foundations for an external tower. However, the feature may equally represent consolidation of the berm where situated over an infilled inner ditch. It is quite possible that the apron seen by Wacher was more extensive prior to being cut through by the medieval town ditch. The rubble seen in the backfilled outer town ditch may be this apron material, redeposited perhaps around the 12th century (Fig. 31, Fig. 32; see Phase 8, below), which would also explain why this rubble was unmortared and thus not demolished wall material.



Fig. 41 The town defences as seen in trial trench 10. Looking south. Possible inner ditch cut (medieval date, in foreground). Town wall robber with some footings surviving at front. Rampart deposits (tagged), and at rear, the team worker is cleaning the area of Building B.



Fig. 42 The town defences as seen in trial trench 10, cont'd. Town wall footings [698] surviving below robber trench. Possible medieval inner town ditch cut in background. Looking north.

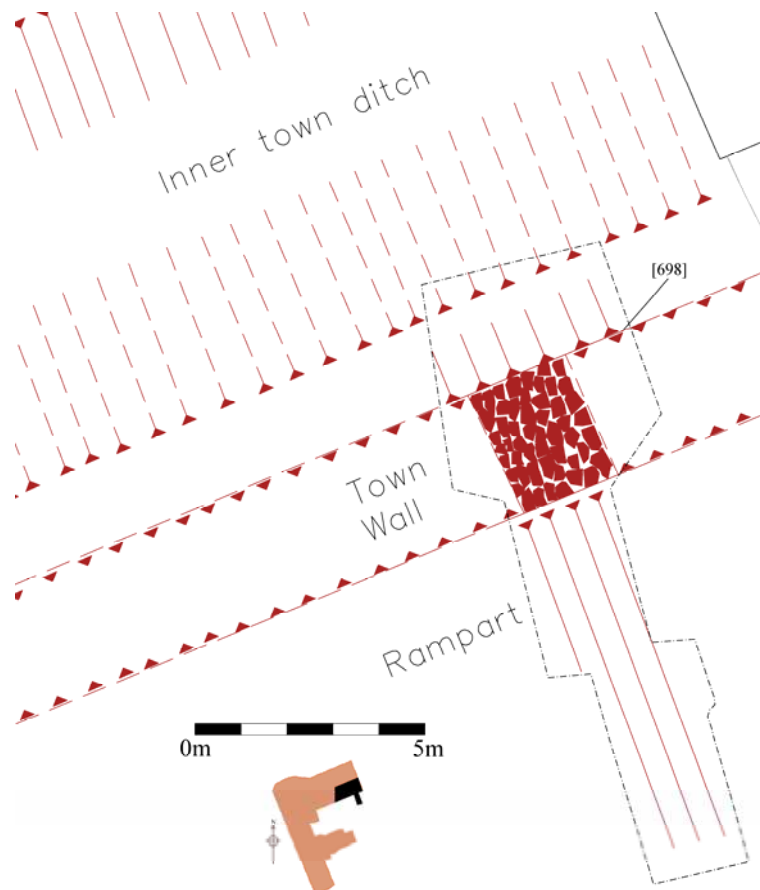


Fig. 43 ?Phase 3c feature contexts, trench 10 area.

Evidence from other Leicester sites has shown that at a later date than the earth and timber defences, a substantial masonry wall was constructed along the line of the outer face of the rampart, replacing the earlier timber palisade. Whilst there is no archaeological evidence for the date of this activity as yet, it is assumed to be in the second half of the 3rd century as in a number of other Roman towns in Britain

(Cooper 1998). The town wall foundations revealed on this site were 2.85m wide, indicating a probable maximum width for the structure (Fig. 43). The footing [698] was dug just *c.*0.5m into the natural ground below the base of the rampart. This is comparable with other sites in the town where the footings have been from *c.*2.7m to perhaps *c.*3.8m in width (Buckley and Lucas 1987, 53). Where *in situ*, two courses of the foundations survived as pitched granite rubble bedded in sandy-clay, with a layer of compacted sand (687) lain between the courses, perhaps as levelling (Fig. 41, Fig. 42). No evidence for the wall's superstructure survived in place but a massive section of wall collapse found north of the wall line provides valuable evidence for its appearance (1285). This town wall fragment was *c.*4.75m long and was located *c.*1.5m beyond the original wall-line having fallen forward onto its outer face (see Fig. 57, and front cover illustration). Much of the collapse had subsequently been robbed and removed but up to five courses of masonry still survived. The construction used roughly squared granite blocks mortared using a hard yellow lime mortar with the flatter faces of each stone selected for the facing, and the longer dimensions of each stone deliberately laid into the wall for additional strength. On the wall-face the stonework stood proud of the mortar with no evidence of rendering, perhaps being an effect of weathering. However, trowel pointed mortar lines have been recorded in other town wall faces (Wacher 1995). No evidence for tile courses was evident, although this does not rule out their use. At both Colchester (Crummy 2003) and in at least two other Leicester buildings (the Jewry Wall; and the *macellum*, Coward and Speed 2009) the build alternated between up to *five* courses of stone and then several of tile. It is quite possible that this town wall fragment was robbed as far as a tile-line then left leaving a final section of the solid mortared granite behind (again, with *five* courses). A fragment of the town wall was lifted, consolidated and is now displayed on the site with an information board (Hyam and Jarvis, vol. 2).

Perhaps associated with the masonry phase of the defences is a large architectural stone fragment (SF133). This is a large cornice moulding from a substantial high status building (Mugnai, vol. 2), and was recovered from a rubble backfill of medieval date in the outer town ditch, presumably material actually derived from the defences. This could be part of the architectural detail from a gateway, or may have originated elsewhere and have been reused in the defences.

Insula V

Fig. 44

Quarry pits [1018] [2327] [2469], small pits [2586] [2149]

By the late 3rd century the only evidence on site of continued domestic activity was a series of pits in *insula V*, including a small group of very large pits [1018] [2327] [2469] located immediately to the north of **Building C**. These were most likely quarry pits, perhaps associated with sand and gravel extraction for the building of the town wall. Material dumped into them provides evidence of the demolition of stone-built structures, presumably **Building C**, during this period. In particular, pit [1018], located adjacent to the northern wall of the building produced a large assemblage of Roman building materials mixed with dating evidence which had a *terminus post quem* of the late 3rd century. To the east of **Building C** small pit [2149] produced further late 3rd century pottery. This pit was 1.10m north-south by 0.79m east-west, with a depth of 0.6m. Also next to **Building C** a further small pit [2586] cut the yard surfaces. This was square in plan, at least 1.01m north-south by 0.81m east-west, and 0.4m deep.

Insula VI

Although it is likely that **Building D** was still in use, no clear evidence for activity was recovered associated with its structure, due largely to later truncation of these later levels.

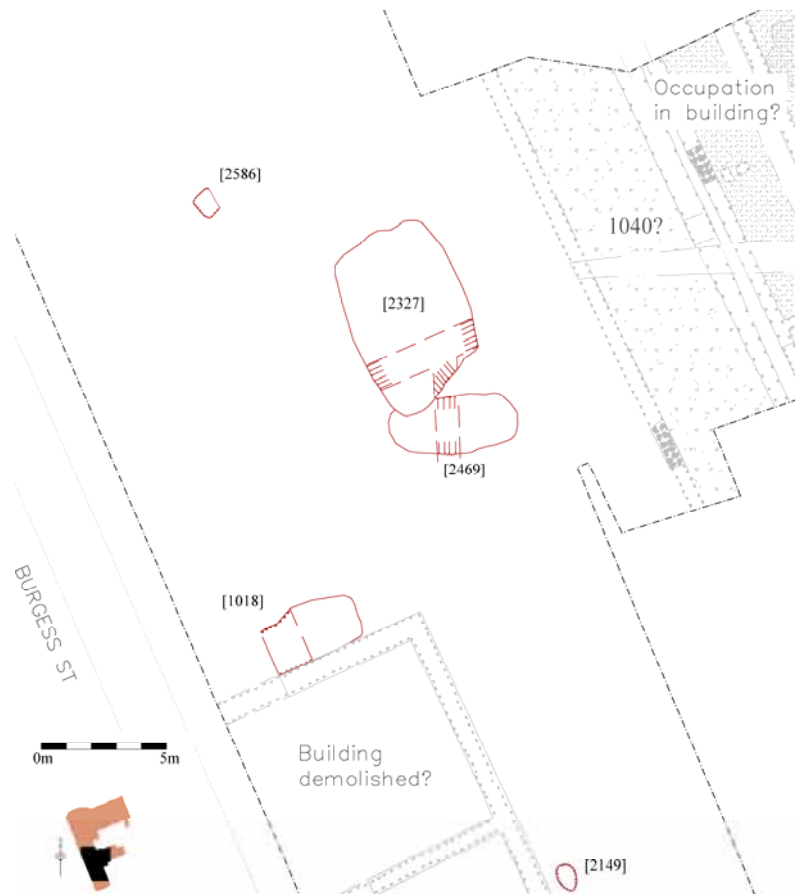


Fig. 44 Phase 3c feature contexts, main area (insula V).

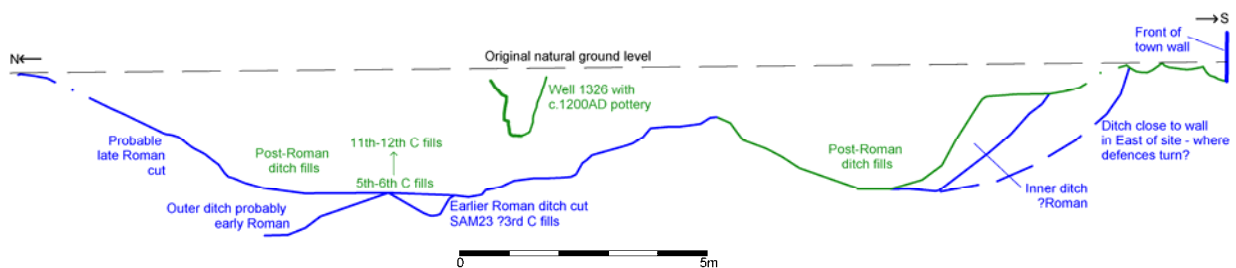


Fig. 45 Schematic dating of town ditches at Sanvey Gate.

Discussion of Phase 3

Excavations have provided the first opportunity to examine the full sequence of the town defences, from the suburban area into the insulae of the town. The sequence is rather complicated by later reworking of the defences in the medieval period and also robbing of the stone structures, but enough information was recovered for a full sequence to be determined. The early defences consisted of steep-sided ditches with the initial ditches being recut, reworked and eventually replaced by one (or more) wide flat bottomed features. Radiocarbon evidence indicates the ditches were maintained from the 2nd through to the 4th centuries. The ditches and the earthen rampart behind were superimposed wholesale on any preceding activity, including a former roadline and the levelling of buildings as necessary. The actual date that the town wall was added to the defences could not be ascertained from site work due to medieval robbing and disturbance, but the rampart, town wall footings and a large fragment of surviving wall fabric have provided much new knowledge. The sub-defensive ditch and wall feature at the tail of the rampart is so far without precedent in Ratae, but form a link between the defences and the civil settlement to the south, where further occupation took place in Phase 3 including a large stone building probably of high status.



Fig. 46 Large pit [1018], late 3rd century dating evidence with large dump of demolition material from Roman building. Just to north of **Building C**.

PHASE 4: THE LATER TOWN DEFENCES, AND LATE ROMAN ACTIVITY (4TH CENTURY AD)

Fig. 48 - Fig. 50

Summary of Phase 4

The town ditches were probably maintained as open features, with evidence for a recut in the late Roman period. Behind the town wall and abutting it, a unique interval 'counterfort' tower was added, probably in this phase. Some domestic occupation activity is indicated as evidenced by pitting, and late Roman pottery in upper pit fills and residual in later features, and evidence for the east-west street being repaired.

Town Ditch recut? [1443]

Defensive Tower? [2885]

Pit 1860?

East-west street metalling 'repair' (2373)

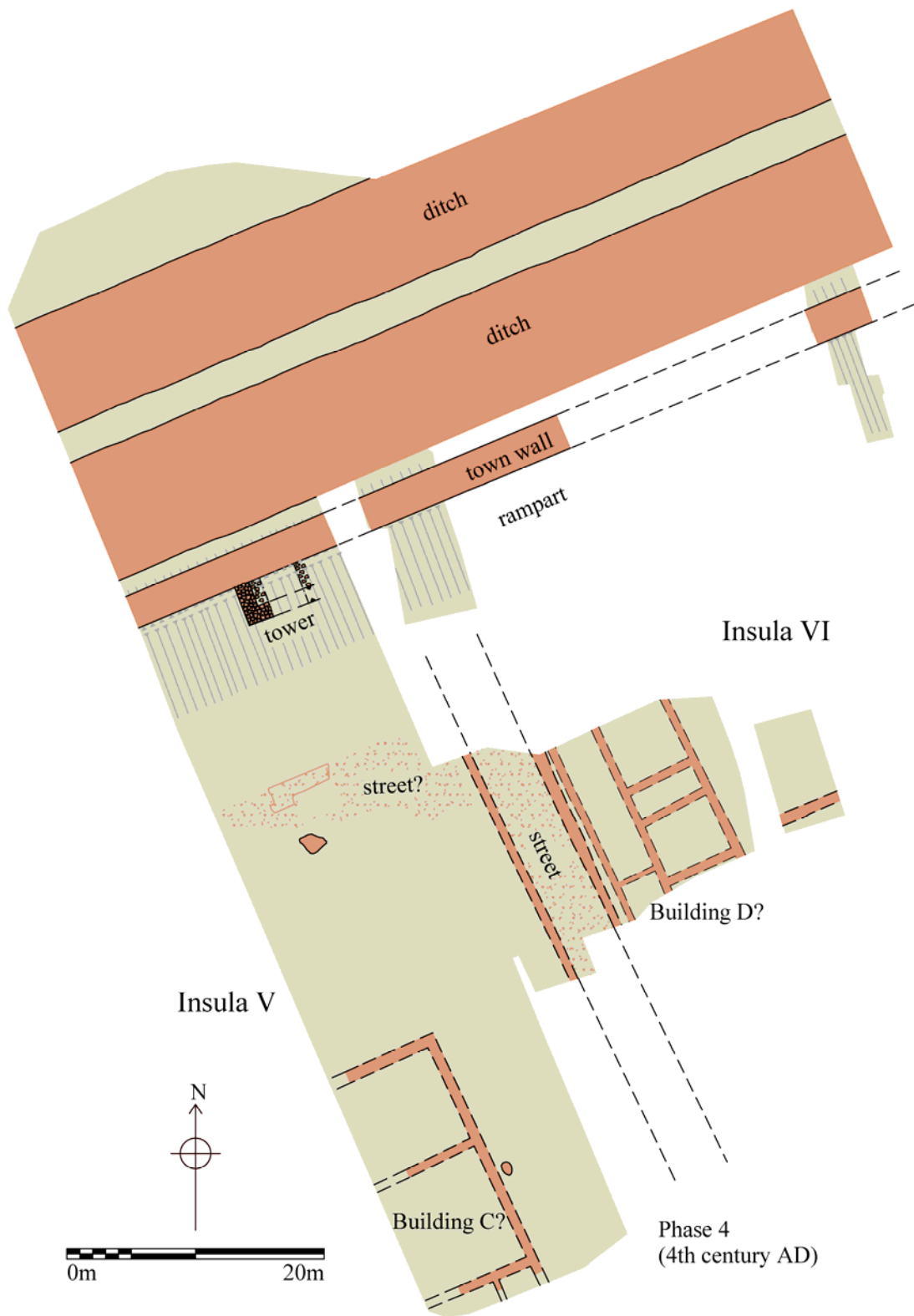


Fig. 47 Phase 4 (4th century), interpretive plan.

The Later Town Defences

Fig. 47, Fig. 48 - Fig. 50

Only the defences indicate significant activity in this phase, with a probable recut of the outer town ditch in the late Roman period being indicated from the radiocarbon results, where a wide flat bottomed feature cut [1443] with an initial fill producing a C14 date of 430AD-620AD (1518±30BP, 95.4% prob.,

Ua40156), indicating a recut shortly before this date. The main inner town ditch may also have been maintained but no trace survived of this due to further recutting in the medieval period.

Evidence for a defensive tower constructed against the inner face of the town wall, ranks as one of the most significant features located during the course of the excavations and comprises the only structure of its type to have been discovered in Leicester to date (Fig. 48 - Fig. 50). Footings for this 'counterfort' tower were set into the south-facing slope of the rampart, and butted up to the town wall-line. The structural remains consisted of stone foundations [2885], extending at right-angles away from the wall southwards for 2.9m. The footings then turned eastwards parallel with the wall for at least a further 2m, and perhaps 6m, before probably returning to the back of the town wall. The footings were 1.2m wide, and survived to a depth of 0.7m. The actual junction between the town wall-line and tower was so truncated to make any relationship impossible to determine. However, evidence from other Roman town sites would indicate that the 'counterfort' tower is likely to have been built either at the same time as, or as a 4th century later addition to an existing town wall (Wacher 1995, Manning 2003). At Sanvey Gate the tower foundations comprised river cobbles on the north-south stretch changing to quarried granodiorite on the east-west stretch. This is quite different to the town-wall footings where they survived on site. Additionally the tower footings were cut to a shallower depth into the subsoil than the town-wall, perhaps adding evidence to the suggestion that they were constructed at different dates. The infill in the void of the tower was composed of clay bonded granite rubble, and the structure may have served as a platform for access to the wall probably from external steps. Alternatively there is evidence that they may have been for siting siege machinery (Manning 2003, 183).

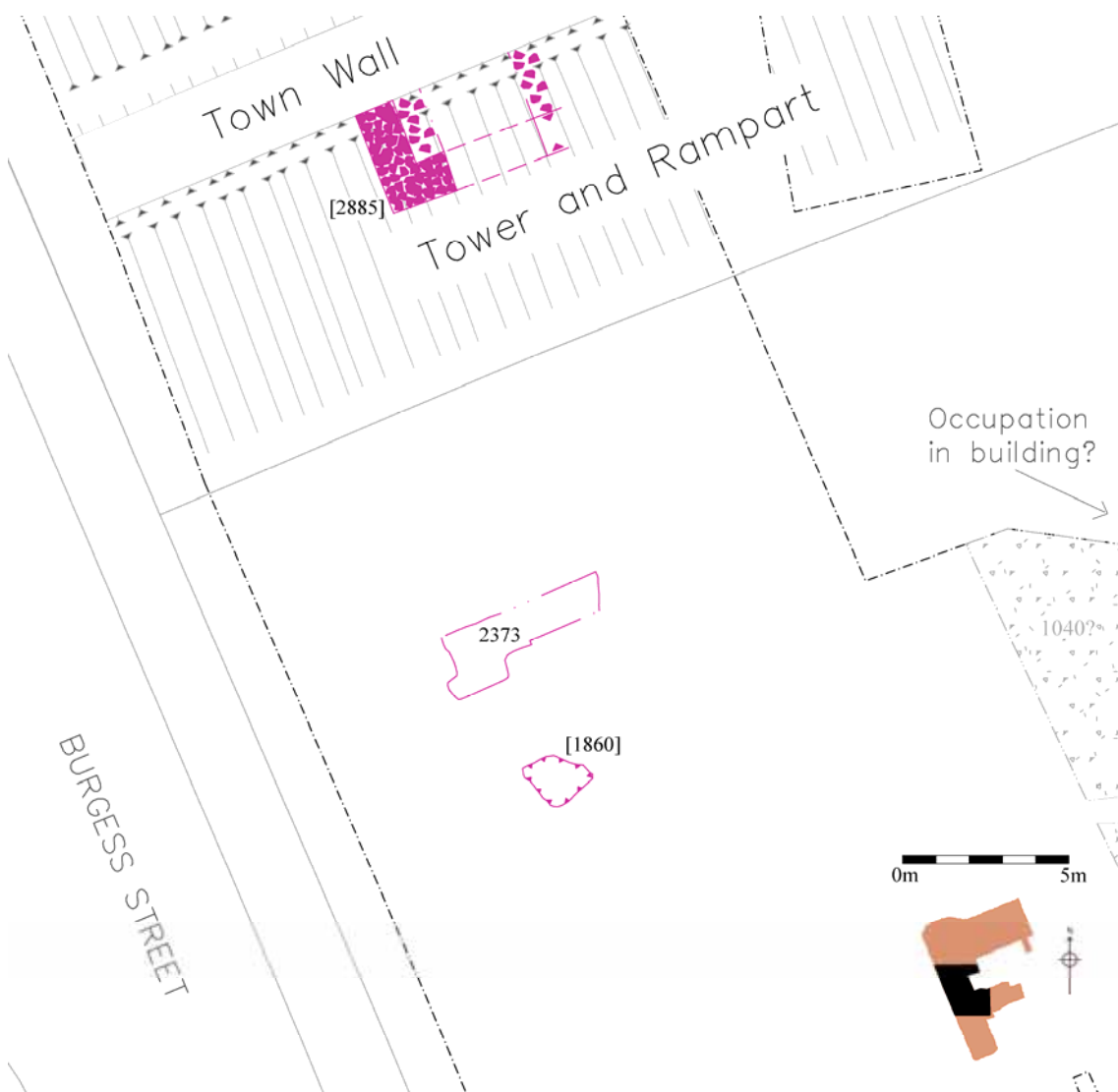


Fig. 48 Phase 4 feature contexts.

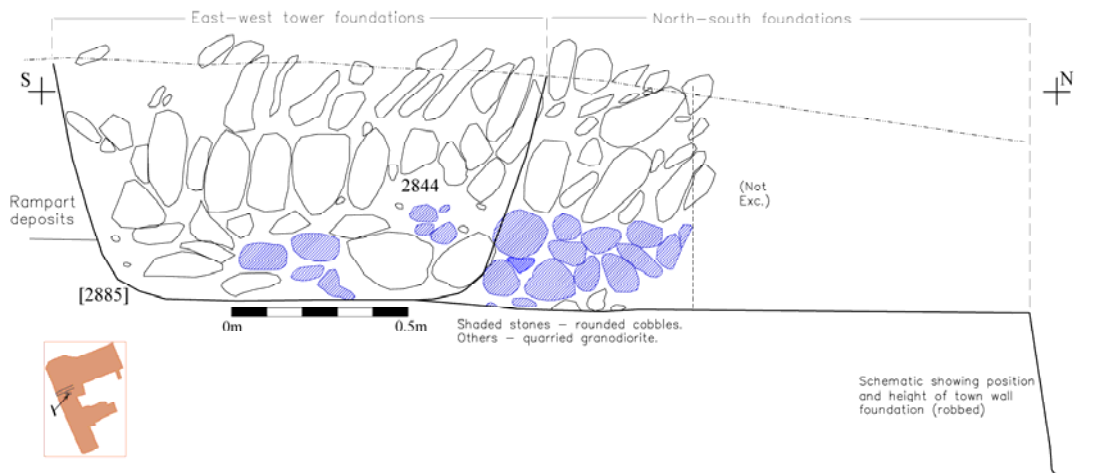


Fig. 49 Tower footings, and relation to town wall.

Intra-mural Activity

Fig. 48

Although a substantial quantity of 4th century material was recovered from across site there were very few features, with the majority of the finds coming from upper fills and occasional layers that survived later truncation. This included the top fills/layers sealing pits [1018] and [2327] adjacent to **Building C**, and the large east-west (sub-defences) ditch [1774]. A single pit [1860] was probably from this phase, and there is evidence for repair of the east-west sub-defences street (2373), Fig. 48. This does indicate some occupation, but as any actual occupation layers have been lost little can be inferred about the nature and extent of this 4th century occupation.

Discussion of Phase 4

Although 4th century domestic activity is indicated, the evidence is quite limited due at least in part to truncation of upper levels from later activity, and the nature of this occupation can not be established. On the other hand maintenance of the defences is indicated by surviving sub-surface deposits, but this activity would be expected as part of ongoing civic works.



Fig. 50 The tower footings [2885] surviving to the rear (south) of the town wall line, the latter visible here (left) as a robber trench. Although disturbed to the east, further stonework in the rear section suggests the tower continued further.

PHASES 5-6: EARLY-MIDDLE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD (400-850 AD)

Fig. 51, Fig. 52

Summary of Phases 5-6

In this phase the defences survived in a gradually more dilapidated state, with evidence for silting and dumping of material into the outer town ditch. No trace survived of the inner ditch due to recutting in the later, medieval period. To the south, and just west of the Roman north-south street, a series of post-Roman structures were built, with two possible sunken featured buildings and a third post-built feature being identified. Early Saxon pottery was recovered from these features. West of these structures, Saxon material was also recorded in pit backfills. No archaeological evidence (features or finds) for Phase 6, the middle Saxon period, was found, but the probable continuity of the line of the sub-defences east-west street is attested from historical sources.

Town ditch infill (1434 etc.) into [1443]

Post-Structure F [2052] [2107] [2225] [2263] [2417] [2592] [2595] [2637]

Structure [2048] (2097)

Layers (2103) (2104) (2106)

Structure [2958] [2959]

Pit [1839] (2144) Scoop [2265]

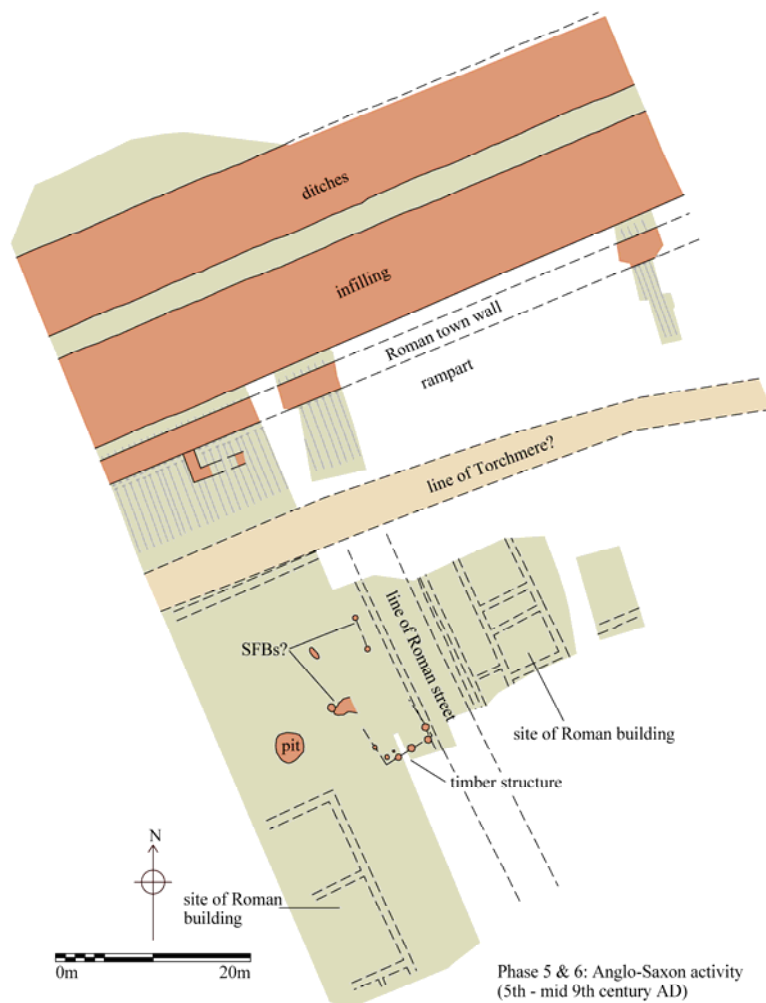


Fig. 51 Phase 5 & 6 (5th – 9th century), interpretive plan.

Although there are historical parallels to suggest that the defences may have been maintained during this period, there is no evidence for their upkeep in Leicester (Buckley and Lucas 1987, 56-7). The town defences would have probably survived many years in any case, with the ditches remaining as partially open features even though not maintained (Fig. 45). No trace of early post-Roman fills survived in the inner ditch due to later recutting in the medieval period. The outer ditch however produced a C14 date of 1518 \pm 30BP (430-620AD 95.4% prob. Ua40156; cut [1443] etc.) for its initial fill, so had perhaps been recut close to the end of the Roman period. Organic material surviving in the waterlogged lower ditch fills included two worked wood plank fragments (SF137, 149; see Jarvis, vol. 2). These wood finds may be from Roman structures, as a post-Roman date would perhaps be unlikely in the absence of other Saxon material here. Much of the fabric of the Roman town wall would also have survived though probably in an increasingly dilapidated state. Evidence actually indicates that the in situ town wall survived in part until the post-medieval period (Buckley and Lucas 1987, 63; and see below, Phases 11-12).

South of the defences were one or more structures sited just to the west of the main north-south Roman street (Fig. 52). Three groups of features were identified, probably representing three separate buildings or possibly one much larger structure. A series of seven or perhaps eight large post-holes apparently parallel to the Roman street, packed with Roman demolition material including tufa blocks, defined a U-shaped structure c.4.6m wide east-west and 2.0m north-south (Post-structure F). The post-holes were up to 0.8m across, and with an average depth of 0.56m. The date of this structure is not totally clear, as although the post-holes were cutting latest Roman levels (Phase 4; 4th century), only Roman (presumably residual) pottery was recovered from their fills. The post-holes can be compared to another feature five metres to the north-west. This was a substantial cut [2048], measuring 0.83m across and 0.78m deep, granite packed and was most likely a large post-hole. Adjacent to feature [2048], context (2097) was up to 0.25m thick, 1.9m east-west and 1.7m north-south. This was a shallow (?truncated) feature fill, and taken with post-hole [2048] these could represent a partially surviving sunken featured building (SFB). Any trace of a second post-hole to the east would have been removed by a deep modern feature cutting this east area. The post-hole, large certainly by Saxon standards does have some parallels; in the Bonners Lane excavations, where a large Saxon building possibly a 'hall house' was recorded the largest post-hole was 0.66m deep (Finn 2004, 15). At recent excavations at Freeschool Lane an Anglo-Saxon structure had post-holes up to 0.85m deep (Coward & Speed 2009). The finds from the two associated contexts [2048] and (2097) consisted of good pottery evidence of Anglo-Saxon date - 19 sherds representing at least 6 vessels, and a fragment of bronze sheet 30mm x 22mm. At the time of excavation this was the first stratified Saxon pottery from within the town, and represents a substantial assemblage (726g). Next to this structure was a group of contexts (layers 2103, 2104, 2106) of a similar nature, all containing some Roman demolition material in occupation deposits. Slightly further north again was a third feature group, two further postholes [2958] [2959] that were around 3.5 metres apart could also be fragmentary and truncated evidence for a structure, like that discussed above. A further large pit [1839] was located a few metres west, this again contained sherds of Saxon date, but it is perhaps possible that this is residual in a medieval context. North of these, post-Roman layer (2144) and scoop [2265] may also be related.

No definite archaeological evidence, either features or finds, was found for Phase 6, the middle Saxon period. There was probable continuity of the line of the sub-defences east-west street, as this continued to be respected through the medieval period.

Discussion of Phases 5-6

This evidence was the first stratified Saxon pottery with structural evidence from within the town, and the pottery assemblage is relatively substantial. The actual character of this Saxon activity is difficult to characterise due to later, medieval truncation taking place. Intriguingly, the location of the Saxon structures adjacent to a Roman roadline, has since been paralleled with evidence from further excavations identifying sunken featured buildings near roads (Coward & Speed 2009), and it seems likely that the roads remained as thoroughfares. There is no evidence archaeologically for the defences being maintained in this period however and the implication from the radiocarbon dating regime is that the ditches were gradually infilling.

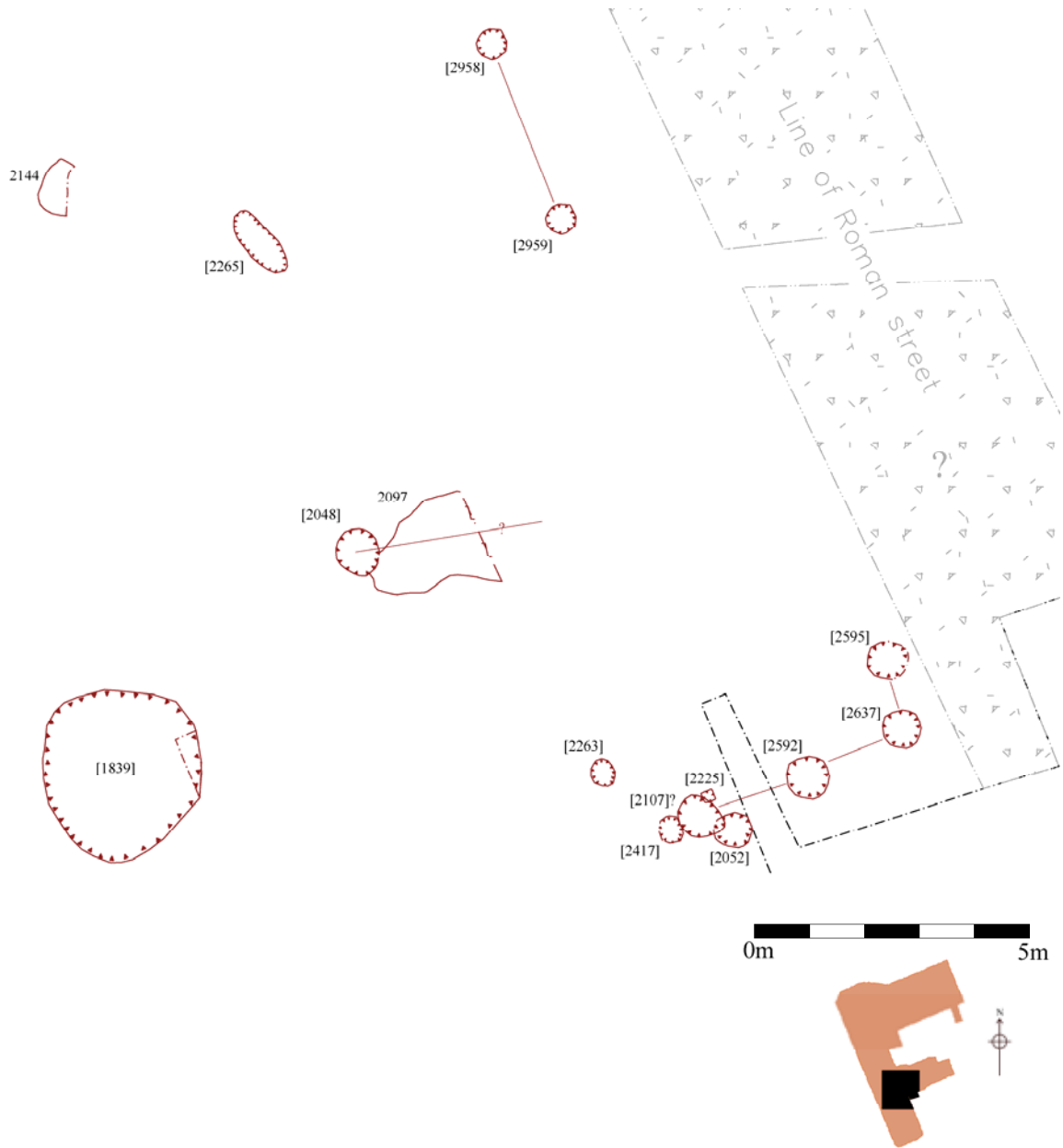


Fig. 52 Phase 5 feature contexts, shown in association with line of north-south Roman road.

PHASE 7: SAXO-NORMAN PERIOD (AD 850-1100)

Fig. 53, Fig. 54, Fig. 55

Summary of Phase 7

A few features produced Saxo-Norman pottery including two large pits in the area of the Roman north-south street. Few other Saxo-Norman finds were recovered, and were quite possibly residual in later features. Evidence from town ditches indicates that they were not maintained in this period, but were still partially open features.

Pits [1044] [1897]

Town ditch infill (1332 etc.) into [1443]

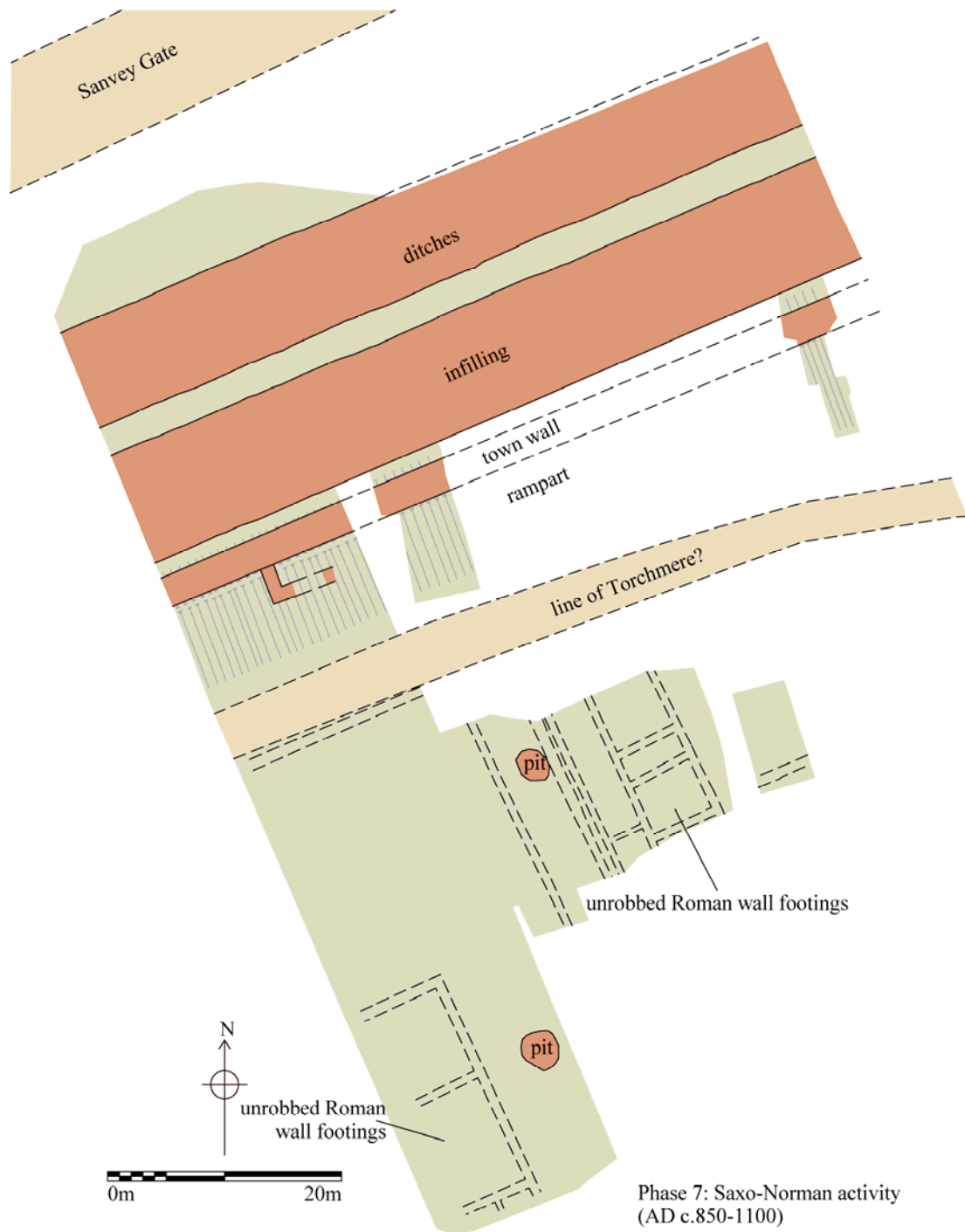


Fig. 53 Phase 7 (AD 850 -1100), interpretive plan.

Within the town walls, were two large pits (Fig. 54), one [1044] measuring 2.97m by 2.47m and 0.48m deep and containing 6 sherds (23g) of Saxo-Norman pottery and 3 of residual Roman pottery. The other pit [1897] was 3.36m by 3.15m and 1.7m deep and contained mostly Roman finds, including building material (Fig. 55), together with 2 sherds (25g) of Saxo-Norman pottery. It is possible that these two pits were of a later period, with the Saxo-Norman pottery being residual, as there was also occasional residual Saxo-Norman pottery in other later features.

The fills of the Roman town ditches continued to accumulate during this period and samples taken one metre up from the base of the outer ditch were radiocarbon dated to 980AD-1060AD (60.1%), 1070AD-1160AD (35.3%, Ua40157), suggesting continued infilling in the 11th-12th century. The inner ditch also contained some residual Saxo-Norman pottery, but these fills are dated by pottery to the 12th-13th century or later (Phase 8).

Discussion of Phase 7

The nature of Saxo-Norman activity is unclear as what few finds that were recovered could be residual in later features, though there is the possibility of pitting activity presumably related to an unknown occupation source. Infilling of the town ditches indicates they were not maintained during this period, but would have survived as partially open features.

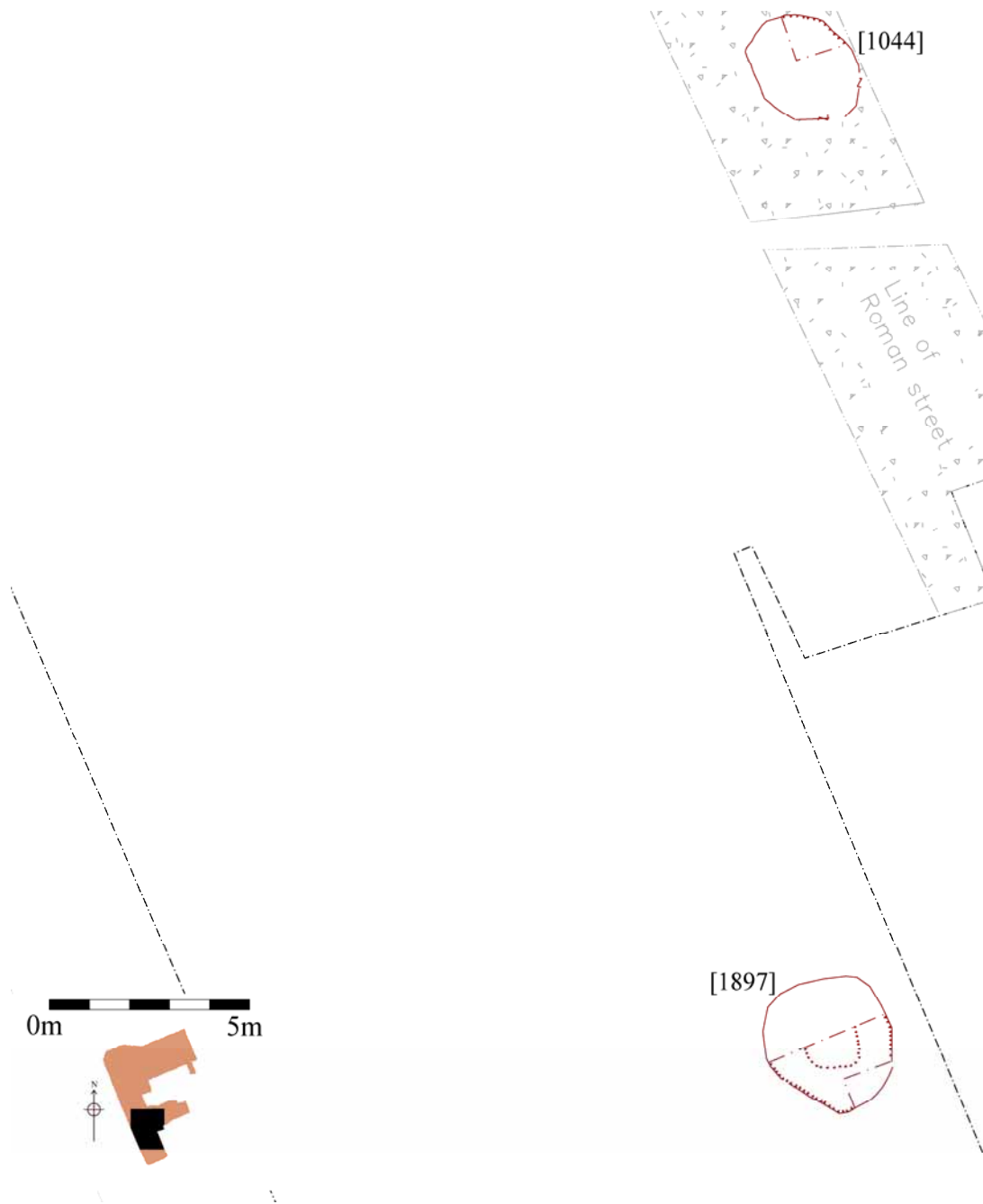


Fig. 54 Phase 7 feature contexts.



Fig. 55 Pit [1897], probably Phase 7 (Saxo-Norman), with dumps of Roman flooring in backfill.

PHASE 8: EARLIER HIGH MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1100-1250 AD)

Fig. 56, Fig. 57 - Fig. 61

Summary of Phase 8

The large-scale robbing of Roman structures that took place in Leicester began in this phase. The exact nature of the defences in this period is somewhat uncertain although continued disintegration took place throughout this period. Certainly, after the mid 12th century a large part of the town wall had collapsed forwards, and the outer ditch had largely been infilled at least partly by deliberate backfilling. Only the inner ditch shows signs of being maintained, and probably recut around this time. Much pitting activity took place, a series of five wells were constructed (with reuse of Roman building materials), and a gully in the east of site is possibly of this date. This indicates some amount of domestic activity on site, although structural evidence and occupation layers were lacking partly due to later truncation.

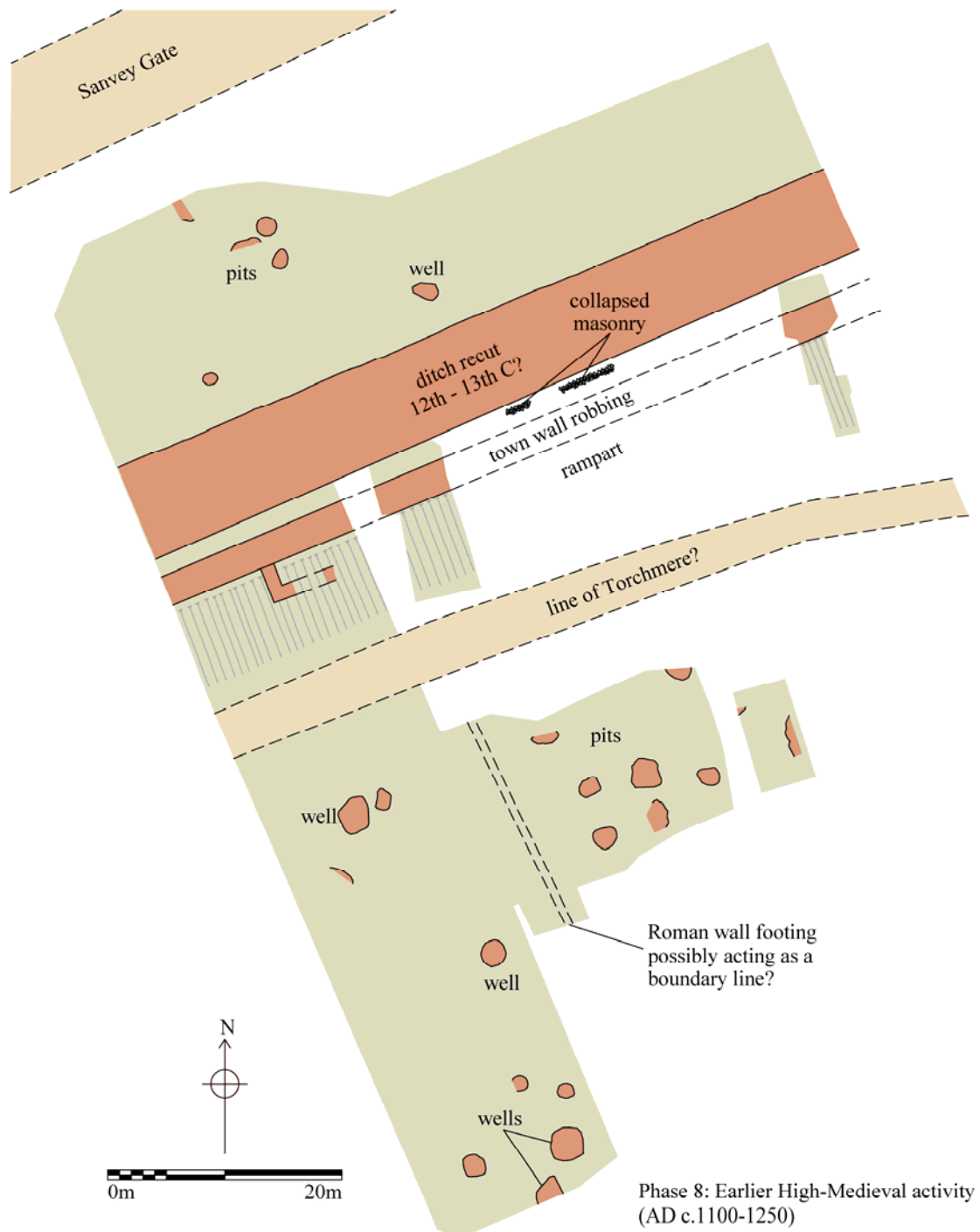


Fig. 56 Phase 8 (AD 1100 – 1250), interpretive plan.

Town defences

Town ditch infills (1323) (1332) (1396) etc. into [1443] [1427] [1502] [1562]

Town wall collapse, layers (1286) (1288) (1742) collapsed town wall fabric (1285)

Some of the secondary fills (e.g. 1396) of the outer town ditch contained substantial concentrations of large fragments of unmortared granite (up to 0.45m by 0.2m by 0.15m). Also within this dump was a large moulded architectural fragment of millstone grit (SF133), measuring 0.65m by 0.4 by 0.3m which almost certainly came from the cornice of a substantial Roman public building (see Mugnai, vol. 2). A radiocarbon determination for one of the deposits at this level gave a date of the 11th-12th century (C14 range 980AD-1060AD (60.1%), 1070AD-1160AD(35.3%), Ua40157), whilst the deposits were cut by a well [1326] which dating evidence indicates filled between 1100 and 1200. This evidence together

indicates that the outer town ditch had largely infilled by the 12th-13th centuries, at least partly due to deliberate infilling. The reasons for this act are not immediately obvious as the rubble clearly had a reuse value for building material in most periods. The most obvious explanation for this act taking place is when the defences may have been deliberately destroyed on the orders of Henry II following the sack of Leicester in 1173 (Buckley and Lucas 1987, 59). During work at Leicester Castle a rubble backfill into the bailey ditch contained dressed stone with mortar adhering (Buckley and Hagar 1992, 180). At Sanvey Gate all the rubble material is unmortared suggesting it may be derived from the grubbing out of Roman footings rather than a demolished town wall. Building foundations just to the south are the most likely source for such a large quantity of unmortared stone. A stone apron of Roman date has been seen in front of the town wall (Wacher 1959), and an alternative explanation is that the rubble is from removal of this. This apron may have been cut through during a medieval recut of a town ditch close to the town wall when the town was redefended, and there is some evidence for this. The narrower inner ditch in contrast to the outer contained pottery from a broad sequence of Saxo-Norman, medieval, early post-medieval and residual Roman date, showing that after a probable re-cut of around 12th-13th century date, it remained an open feature and filled gradually until the 16th century and was actually still a visible feature as late as the 18th century (Stukeley 1724). Waterlogging of the lower fills of this ditch meant organic material survived and four fragments of a medieval leather shoe (SF143) were found in context (1572).

A series of layers (1286, 1288 and 1742) in front of the line of the town wall, dated to the 12th century by pottery, were sealed by a substantial section of town wall which had collapsed face-down towards the north (Fig. 57). The fragment of wall measured 4.75m long (1285), but was almost certainly part of a much larger section of collapse, as another 1.8m long fragment (1306) was observed 3.2m to the west and the character of the deposits suggested that it continued beyond the extents of the area excavated here. It is most likely that further upper and lower courses had also collapsed but were later robbed away, leaving a stretch that retained five original courses. This collapse of wall is perhaps more convincing evidence for the slighting of the defences in this period.



Fig. 57 Collapsed town wall fragment (1285) at background. The ranging rod is on the north edge of the town wall robber trench. Garden soils survived either side of the town wall. Looking north.

Robbing of walls

Fig. 57, Fig. 60

Robbing [961] (2932) etc. [1046] [2960] [1842], of defences - [107] etc.

Pottery from the backfill of robber trenches of Roman structures indicates that the large east-west sub-defences wall, the east roadside wall, and the foundations for **Buildings C** and **D** were partly robbed in

this phase, if not later. The robbing backfill into the town wall footings also produced pottery predominantly of this date, and it is likely that the superstructure of this and the 'counterfort' tower were robbed during the same period.

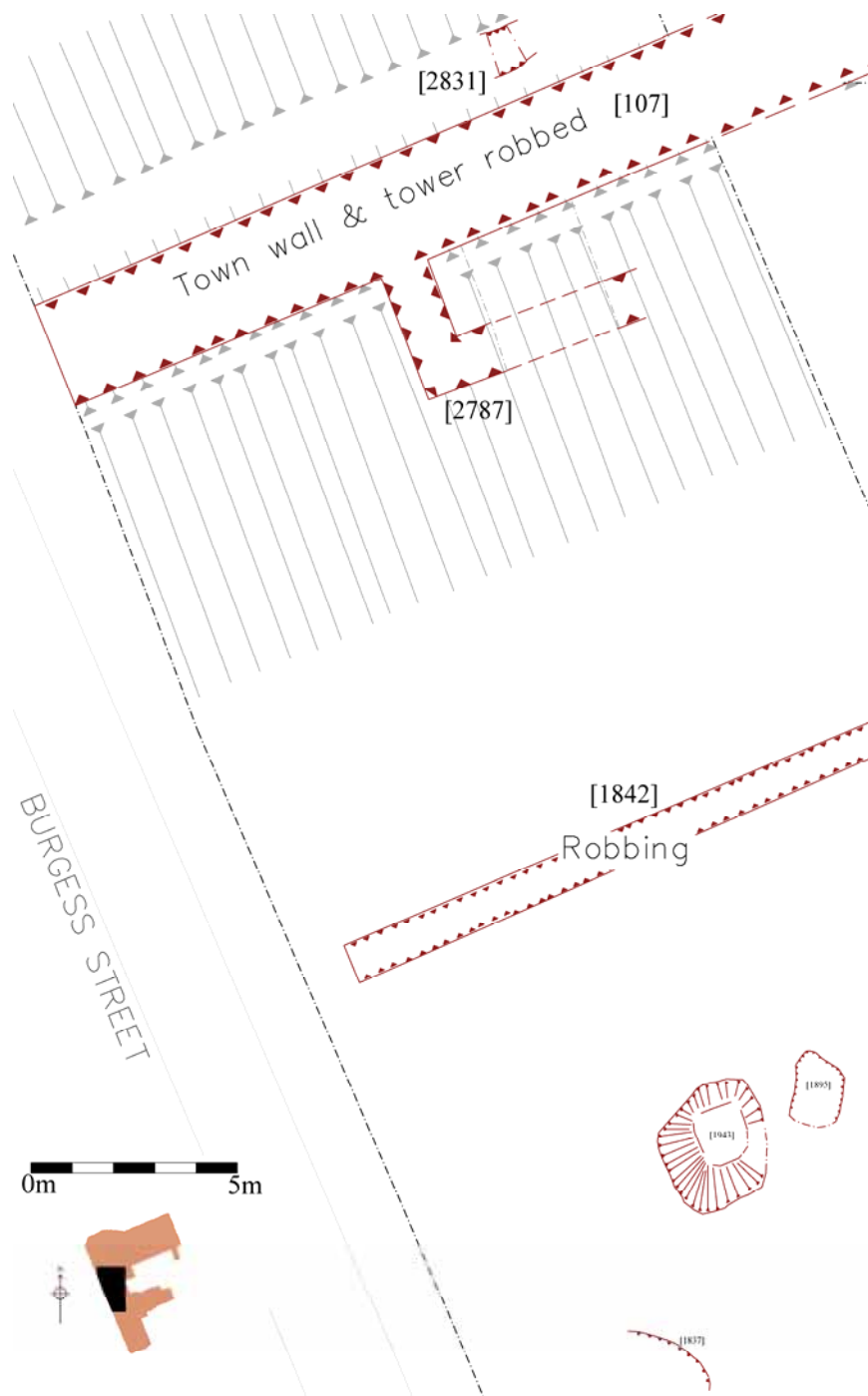


Fig. 58 Phase 8 feature contexts, central area of site.

Pits/domestic occupation

Pits [648] [659] [1048] [1080] [1383] [1837] [1851] [1895] [2051] [2139] [2477] [2937] [2948] [2968] [2970] [3031] [3043] [3078] [3110]

Gully [631]

Wells [1326] [1779] [1806] [1943] [2237]

Intra-mural Activity

Fig. 58 - Fig. 60

Twelve sub-circular pits were assigned to this phase, nine of which varied from about 0.5m to 1.9m in diameter and 0.25m-0.8m deep and contained material which suggested that they were domestic rubbish pits (1048, 1837, 1895, 1851, 2051, 2139, 2477, 2948 and 2970). There were also three larger pits, measuring 3m across and just 0.2m deep [2937], 1.9m in diameter and 1.65m deep [3031], and 2.2m in diameter and 1.4m deep, the latter perhaps a quarry due to the absence of rubbish or cess deposits. Two more or less sub-rectangular pits (3043, 3110) which measured 1.8m-2.4m across and 1.2m-1.8m deep contained cess-like deposits. The upper fills of pit [3043] comprised deliberate backfill with demolition rubble. Pit [3078] nearby was of comparable dimensions, irregular in shape, but may have had a similar function although no cess-like deposits survived.

One well, measuring 2.7m across and a minimum of 1.4m deep contained fragments of timber lining whilst two others were robbed sub-rectangular stone lined wells, varying between 2.1m and 2.9m in diameter (construction cut) and up to 2.5m deep ([1779] and [1806]). It is worth noting that the dating evidence largely came from disuse fills of these wells though primary fills were targeted where possible, so it is possible that they are somewhat earlier than their pottery assemblages might indicate.

The only other intra-mural feature probably of this phase was a 0.24m wide, shallow east-west gully (631) observed for a length of 0.6m parallel to, and at the back of, the defences.



Fig. 59 Phase 8 feature contexts, east area of site.

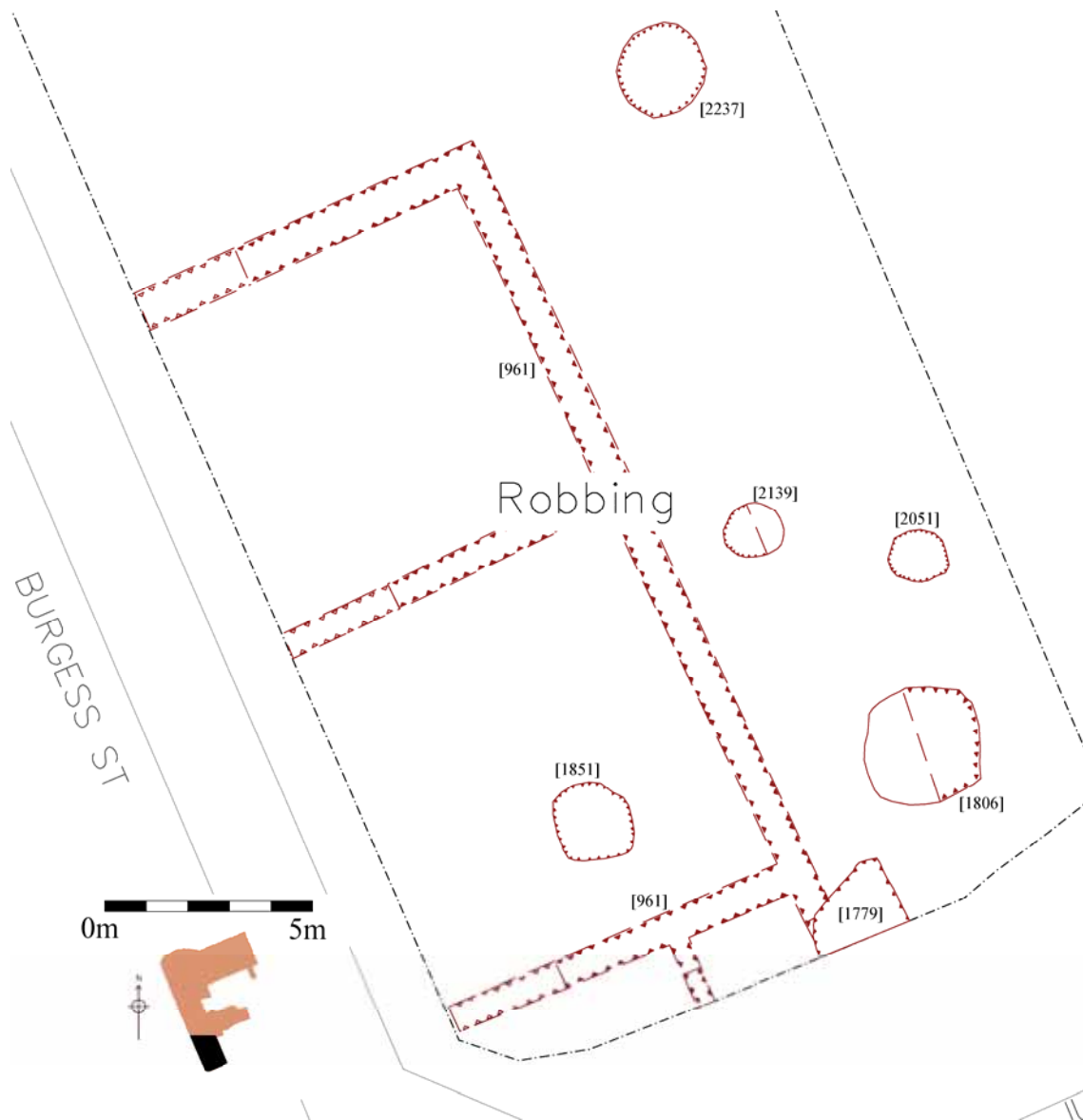


Fig. 60 Phase 8 feature contexts, south area of site.

Extra-mural Activity

Fig. 61

Pits encountered to the north of the town wall presumably relate to domestic activity in properties fronting on to Sanvey Gate in the north suburb (Fig. 61). The plots extended southwards towards the defences and where infilled, the town ditch was cut by occasional rubbish pits/cess pits. Five pits close to the frontage varied in size from 0.5m to 2.63m across and 0.4m-1.05m deep (648, 659, 670, 1080 and 1383) and at least one may have been a cess pit, although extremely shallow at 0.3m deep (1384). Well [1326], lined with clay-bonded granite, and measuring 1.4m by 2.2m and 2.5m deep, cut the partly infilled town ditches.

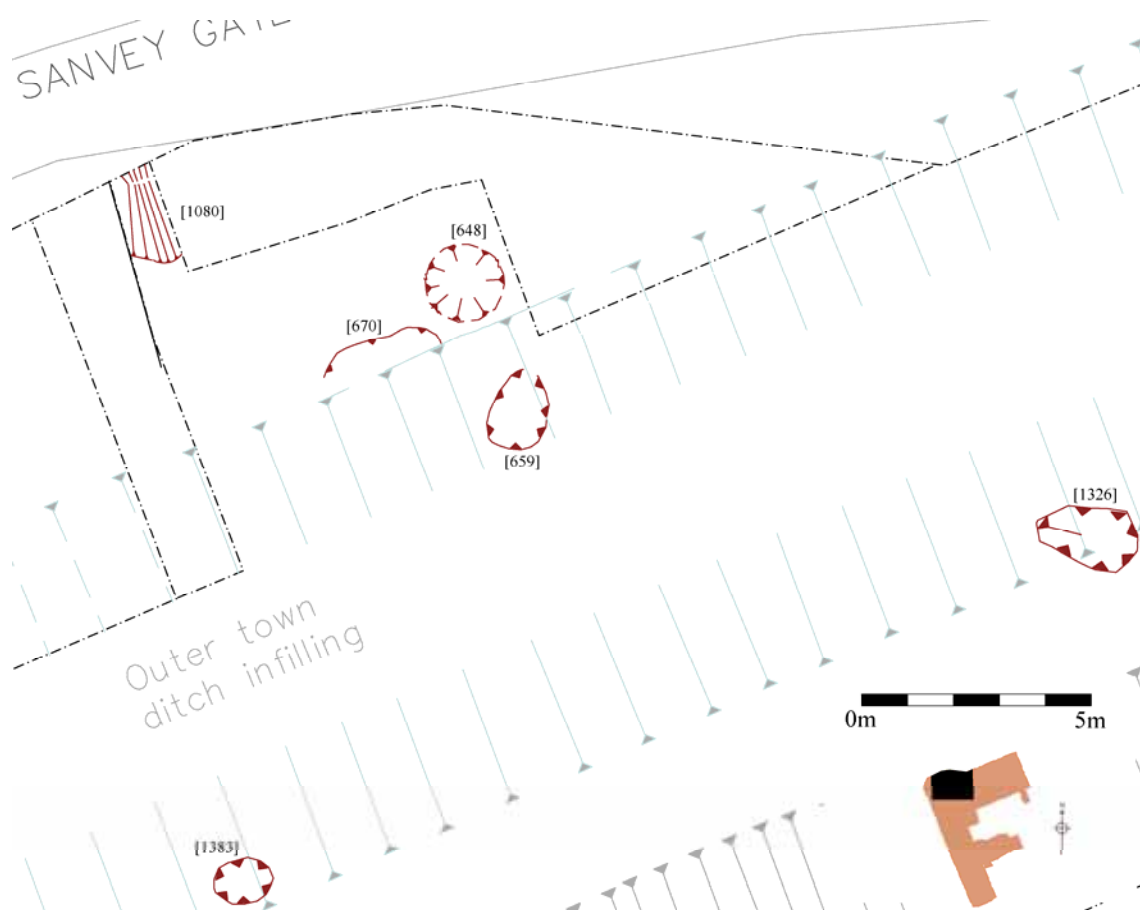


Fig. 61 Phase 8 feature contexts, north area of site.

Discussion of Phase 8

The deliberate backfilling of the northern town ditch with rubble (probably taken from Roman foundations) and the collapse of the town wall fits closely with events around this date when the defences may have been deliberately destroyed on the orders of Henry II following the 1173 sack of Leicester. This seems the most plausible explanation for the large-scale dumping of stone that judging by the amount of robbing that took place during this phase otherwise had great value as a building material. This event marks the end of the outer town ditch, with only the inner ditch showing signs of being maintained, and probably recut around this time. Domestic activity is indicated both within and outside the town by pitting activity taking place and a series of wells being constructed. A gully in the east of site hints at probably more extensive activity lost through truncation.

PHASE 9: LATER HIGH MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1250-1400 AD)

Fig. 63 - Fig. 66

Summary of Phase 9

Further pitting and robbing of Roman structures was carried out, and adjacent to the line of the medieval street of Torchmere a single inhumation burial was placed, perhaps related to the church of St. Michael's to the south-west of the site. In the south of the Sanvey Gate site a stone-lined well was constructed. After a period of relative inactivity on the Sanvey Gate frontage, pit cutting was then succeeded by a post and beam timber structure **Building E1**. A hearth to the west, and yard surface to the south, were associated with this structure. To the south edge of the frontage was a possible north-south wall-line.

Pitting [991] [1591] [1902] [2588] [2890] [2964] [3055]

Well [1888] and Post-hole? [1906]

Burial [1783] (1788)

(Area 1) - Occupation levels (45-6) (90-8)

Extra-mural (Frontage) activity - pits (597 etc.) [1075] [1670] [1685] then

Building E1 [1240] [1134]

Robbing ?[1037]

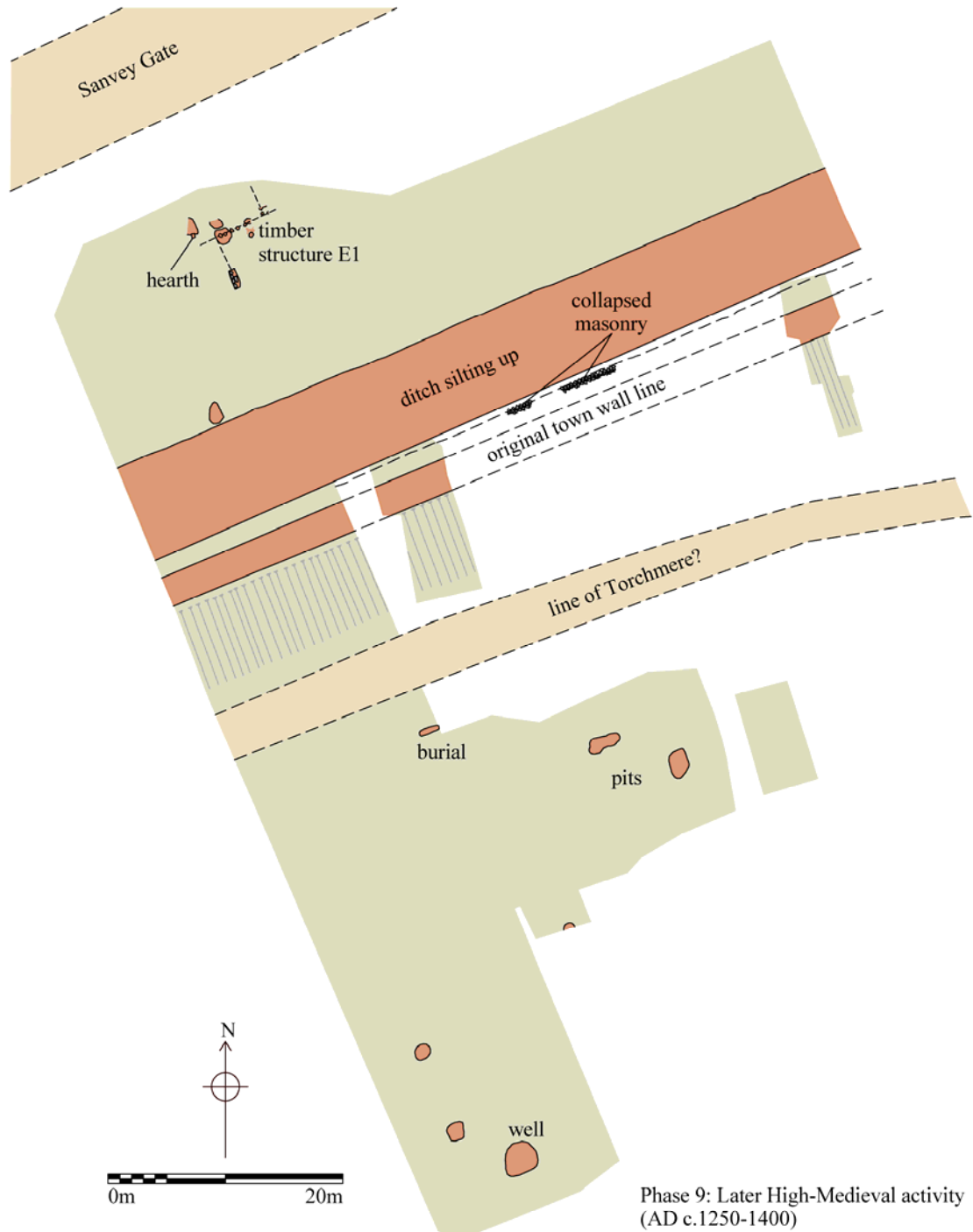


Fig. 62 Phase 9 (AD 1250 – 1400), interpretive plan.

Pits/domestic occupation

Intra-mural Activity

Fig. 64 - Fig. 66

Evidence for domestic activity consisted of five pits, presumably relating to the backyards of intra-mural plots. Pit [2964] measured 2.7m x 1.37m x 0.27m deep (min) and to the south east of it, pit [3055] was 2.1m x 1.65 x 1.35m deep and perhaps a quarry pit, but backfilled with some demolition material and cessy deposits. Further south was a small steep-sided pit cut [2588] 1.1m in diameter and 0.5m deep. Parallel with Burgess Street were pits [991], 1.44m x 1.2m x 0.54m deep and [1902], 1.52m x 1.33m x 0.51m deep.

In the southern area of site was a stone-lined well [1888] with a D-shaped cut, 2.98m by 2.7m, with a partially robbed clay-bonded stone lining. Possible post-hole [1906], 0.8m in diameter and 0.6m deep cut one of the construction contexts of the well and is probably associated.

Just south of the line of the defences was an inhumation burial adjacent to, and just to the south of, the line of modern Long Lane (Fig. 65). This fossilised the line of Olive Hill; the latter in turn following the projected line of the medieval street of Torchmere in the central area of the site, although no archaeological evidence for this medieval street survived. The grave cut [1783] was aligned slightly off east-west, an orientation paralleled in the probably contemporary cemetery of the church of St Michael's sited on the other side of Burgess Street (Higgins et al. 2009). The grave cut measured 1.7m long by 0.51m wide and the burial was placed unusually with the head at the east end. There was no evidence for a coffin, and the close spacing of the limbs indicates that the body was probably buried in a shroud, perhaps explaining this uncommon positioning. The left arm crossed over the body towards the right wrist, with the right arm being alongside the torso. The legs were crossed at the ankles, with the left foot lying over the right foot. The burial was also tight within the actual grave cut which measured 1.7m long by 0.51m wide. Two sherds of 13th (or possibly 14th) century pottery were recovered from the grave fill (1788), along with occasional residual Roman pottery and building materials. To the east, in Area 1 further material of this date was recovered just north of the line of Torchmere, and probably indicating structural activity. Here in trench 8, a 1.2m deep area of stratigraphy was preserved at its west end. This consisted of a series of layers including probable clay and pebble surfaces producing pottery of this date. No further work after evaluation was carried out here however.

Extra-Mural Activity

A period of inactivity is indicated by a build up of a 'garden-soil' (contexts 597 etc.) on the Sanvey Gate frontage where further occupation was then focussed. The initial occupation evidence here consisted of a small group of pits: [1075] measuring 1.62m by at least 0.96m and 1.2m deep; [1670], 1.6m x 1.3m x 0.76m deep and [1685], 0.92m x 0.7m and just 0.24m deep. These were followed by a timber structure, **Building E1** comprising an east-west line of post-holes with a parallel post and beam-slot to the north of it. The post-holes were in two main groups: a western line of six, 0.3m in diameter, up 0.25m deep and 0.55m apart and an eastern line of three of similar shape and dimensions. The latter were associated with a 0.2m wide and up to 0.3m deep beamslot. To the west of this structure, hearth material (1240-1) survived in a regular rectangular shape measuring 0.4m by 0.27m, and just to the south of the timber structure was a possible yard surface, 0.8m by 0.6m.

These features most likely represent domestic activity focussed around the timber building. Several metres to the south a disturbed line of stonework, 1.5m long and 0.6m wide, may indicate a further building. The stones were reused Roman material forming a rubble core probably the base of a wall-line. This alignment continued southwards into the partially filled town ditches, and probably originally continued further, but was destroyed through slumping.

Pit [1591], 1.4m by 1.34m and 0.39m deep, was located on the berm between the town ditches. A steep-sided feature, [2890] to the south was also probably a pit, 0.82m north-south and at least 0.64m east-west.

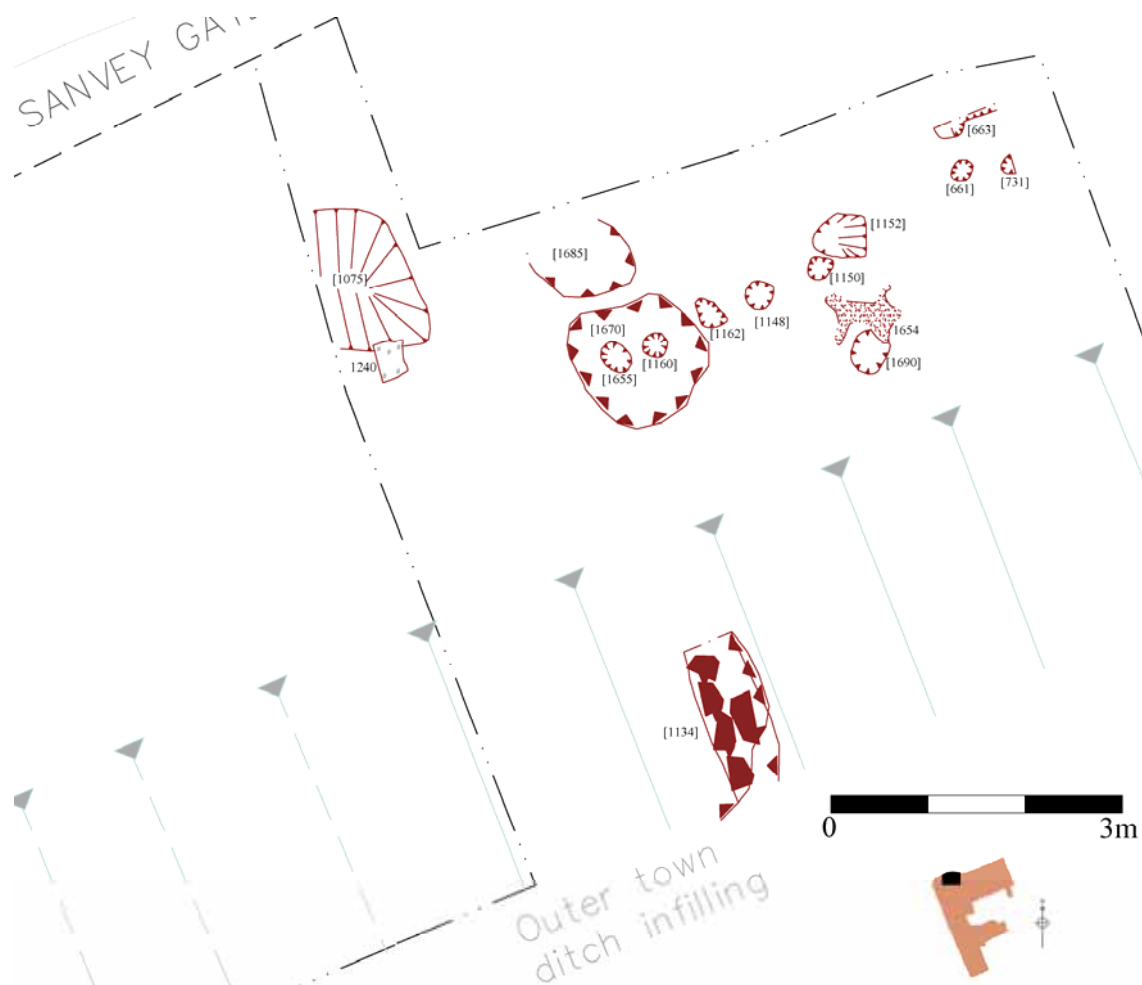


Fig. 63 Phase 9 feature contexts, north area of site (Sanvey frontage).

Robbing of Roman structures

Fig. 64

Some further robbing of Roman structures probably also dates to this period, and backfill into the west roadside wall robber, cut [1037] produced pottery of this date. This was part of a mixture of residual material including a sherd of Anglo Saxon pottery, along with the mid-late 13th century assemblage.

Discussion of Phase 9

The Phase 9 intra-mural evidence largely consists of pits and a stone well, probably backyard activity from frontage dwellings lost during modern road widening. The exception is on Sanvey Gate, where a 'pocket' of survival occurred, which gives some insight into the character of frontage activity. This indicated a timber post-built structure along with a hearth and a yard or floor surface, and south of this an ephemeral stone wall foundation. Additionally the isolated single burial is significant, and the location close to the line of the street of Torchmere and near to the church of St. Michael's.

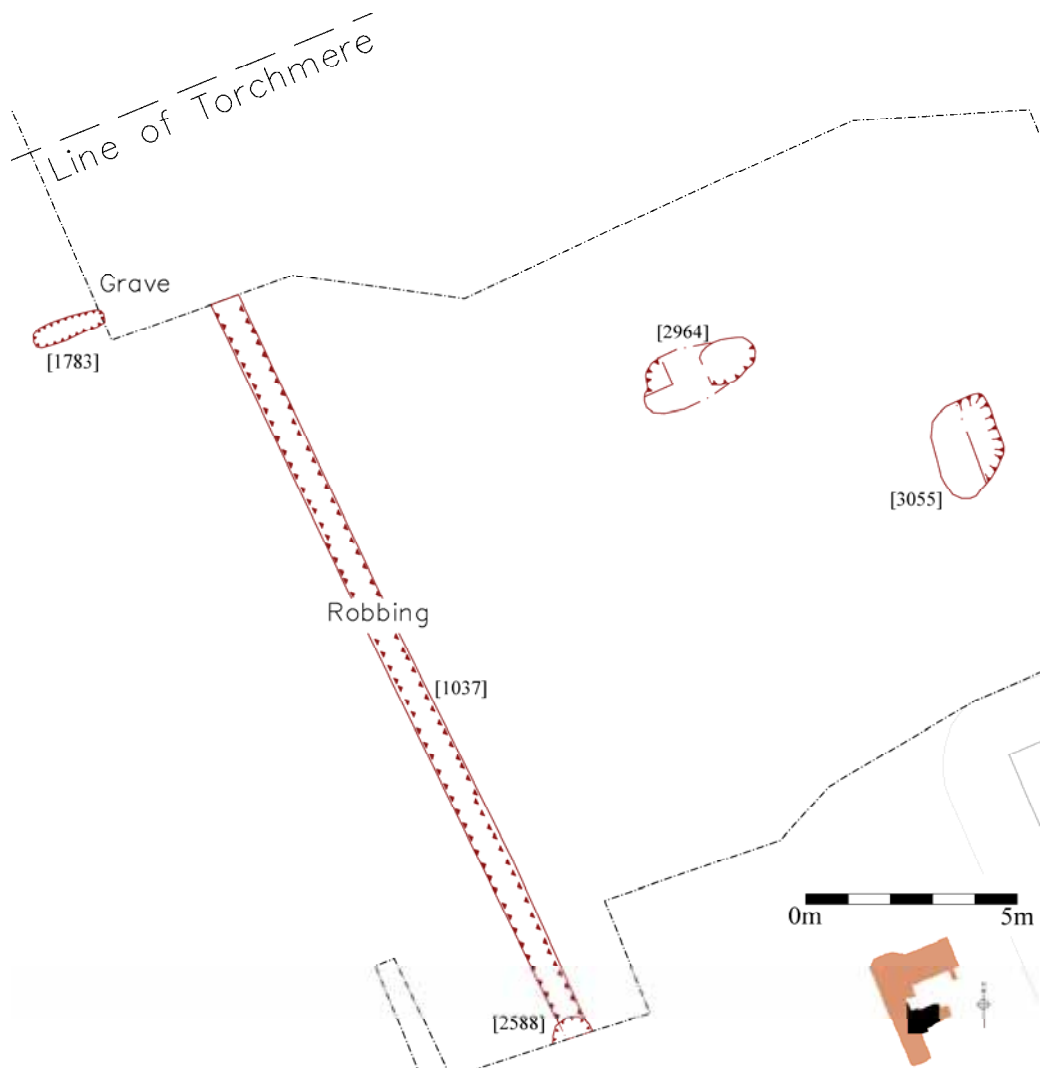


Fig. 64 Phase 9 feature contexts, east area of site.



Fig. 65 Inhumation burial [1783] just to south of the line of Torchmere.

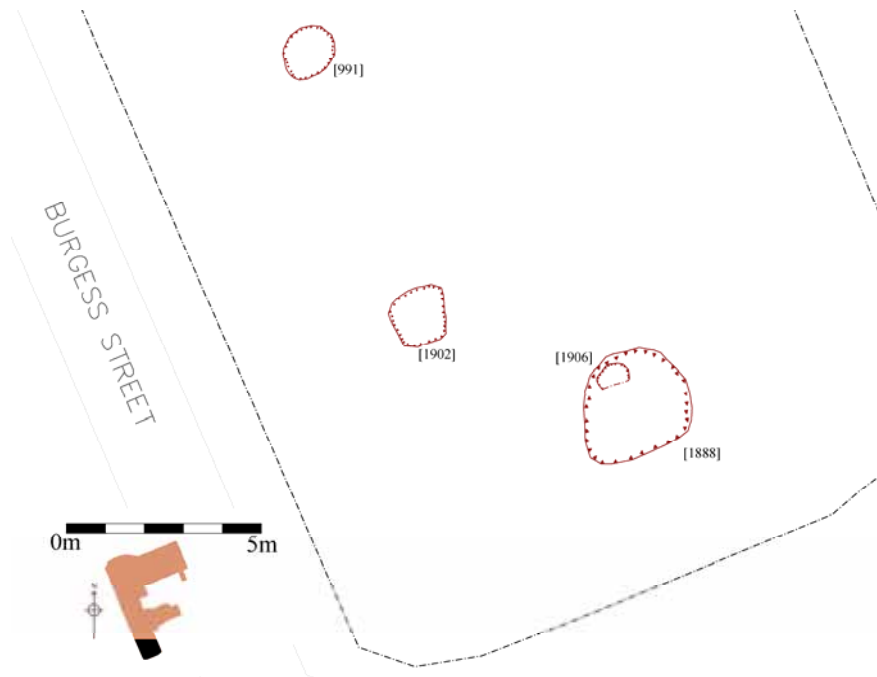


Fig. 66 Phase 9 feature contexts, south area of site.

PHASE 10: LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (AD 1400-1500)

Fig. 67, Fig. 68

Summary of Phase 10

Further domestic activity on the Sanvey frontage is indicated by timber post-settings, a clay floor surface, an L-shaped stone wall or footing for a timber structure, and a stone-lined well and pair of gullies. Some further robbing of Roman structures took place to the south including a probable mid-Roman well.

Robbing, Town wall [107] etc. - upper fills with 15th-16th C pottery, well [1893]

Extra mural (frontage) activity (603 etc.)

Structural activity **Building E2** - (603), [1085], post-holes [590], [592], [594], [596], [641], [727], [729]

Linear gullies [1126] [1128]

Well [1103]

Town defences

Some upper fills into the town wall robber trench produced late medieval pottery, most probably indicating further land clearance of this date, with dumps of material into the partly filled feature.

Intra-mural

Further robbing took place of Roman structures, included robbing cut [1893] of a probable 2nd century well (cut [1948]).

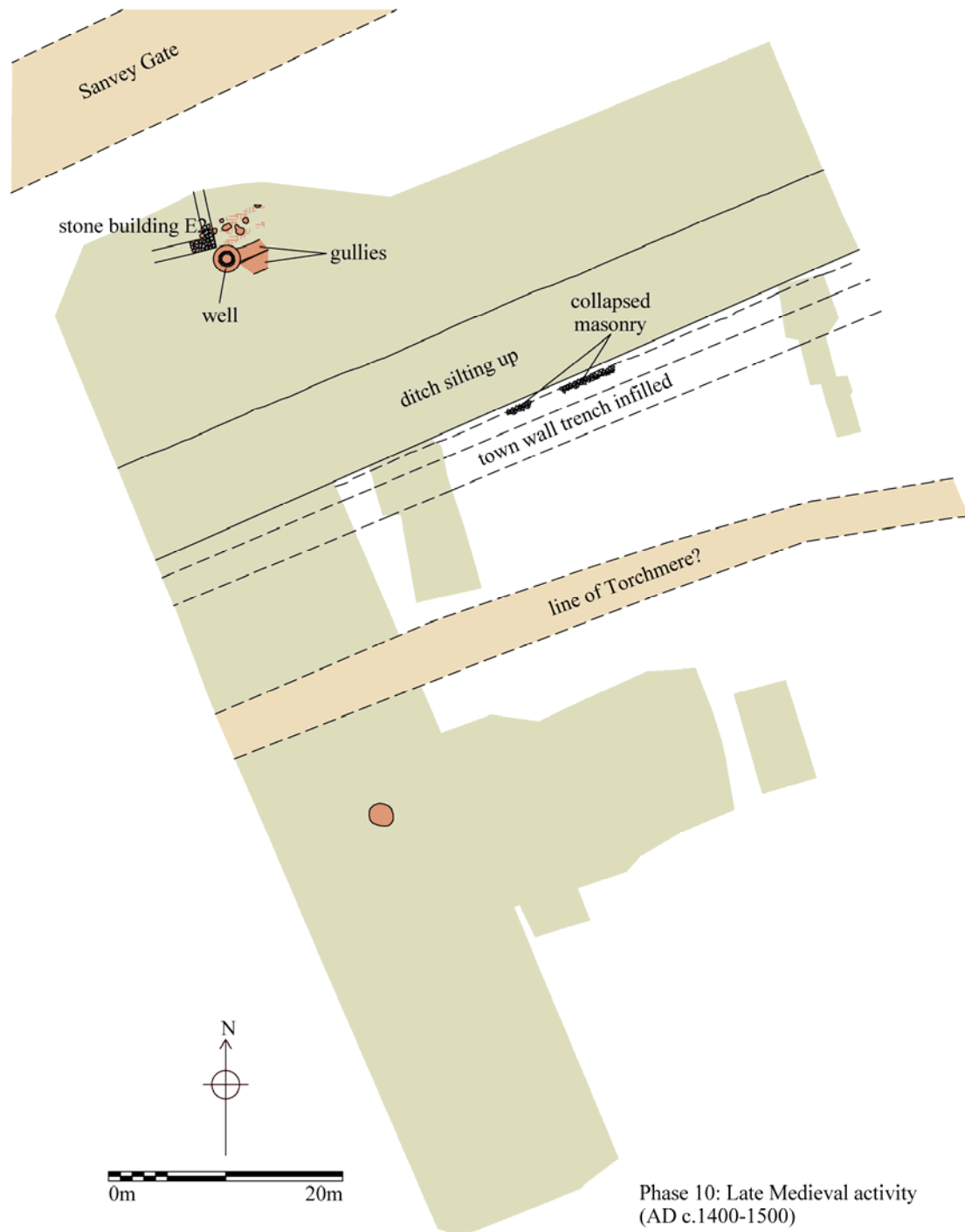


Fig. 67 Phase 10 (AD 1400 – 1500), interpretive plan.

Extra-mural

Fig. 68

The Phase 9 structure **Building E1** was sealed by a 4.2m by 2.2m clay floor (603), most likely associated with the corner of a structure (**Building E2**) represented by an L-shaped stone-founded wall which only survived to the west. This feature consisted of a loose rubble footing [1085], measuring 2.1m north-south by 2.15m east-west with a width of 0.9m and a depth of 0.2m, and was perhaps a base for a timber structure. Adjacent to this on the frontage was a 5.5m long east-west alignment of 0.7m diameter and 0.25m deep post holes. To the south of these structures were two east-west gullies running parallel with the largely infilled town ditch. The northernmost one [1126] was 0.82m wide and 0.3m deep and was traced for 2.8m whilst the southern [1128] was 1.47m wide and 0.39m deep with a minimum length of

c.4.4m. Both were in turn cut by a clay-bonded granite-lined well [1103] of 1.3m in diameter within a larger 2.2m cut.

Discussion of Phase 10

The structural activity on the Sanvey frontage indicated by the timber post-setting, clay floor, and L-shaped stone wall or timber structure footing, may be a rebuild of the Phase 9 building here. These are associated with the pair of gullies and stone-lined well.

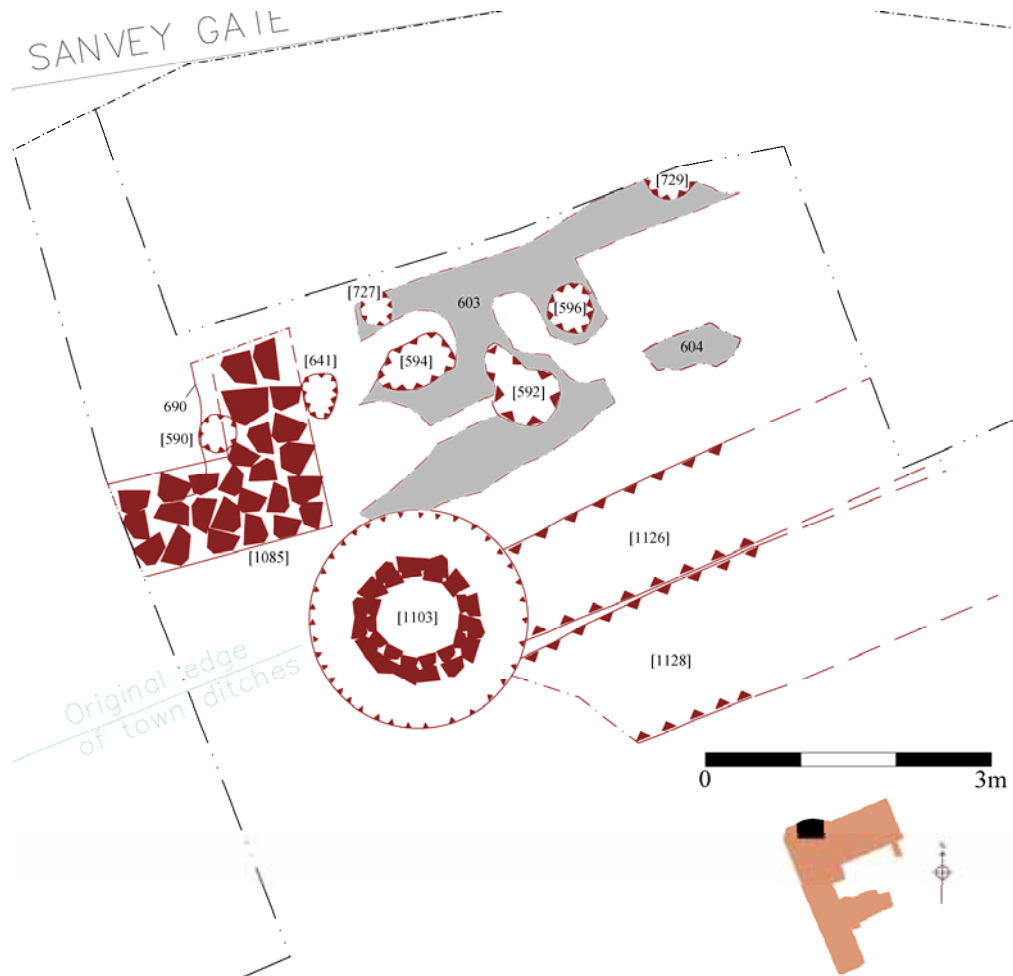


Fig. 68 Phase 10 feature contexts, north area of site (Sanvey frontage).

PHASES 11-12: POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1500-1750 AD)

Fig. 69, Fig. 70

Summary of Phases 11-12

The collapsed Roman town wall, along with some comparatively crude infilling and rebuilding was reused as a boundary feature. This boundary has been maintained and respected up to the present day. A well was sited to the north of this, and south of the town wall-line was a possible east-west wall.

- Reuse of town wall - (1285), (1304), (1306), (1714)
- Stone linear feature? - (550)
- Probable well- [1119]

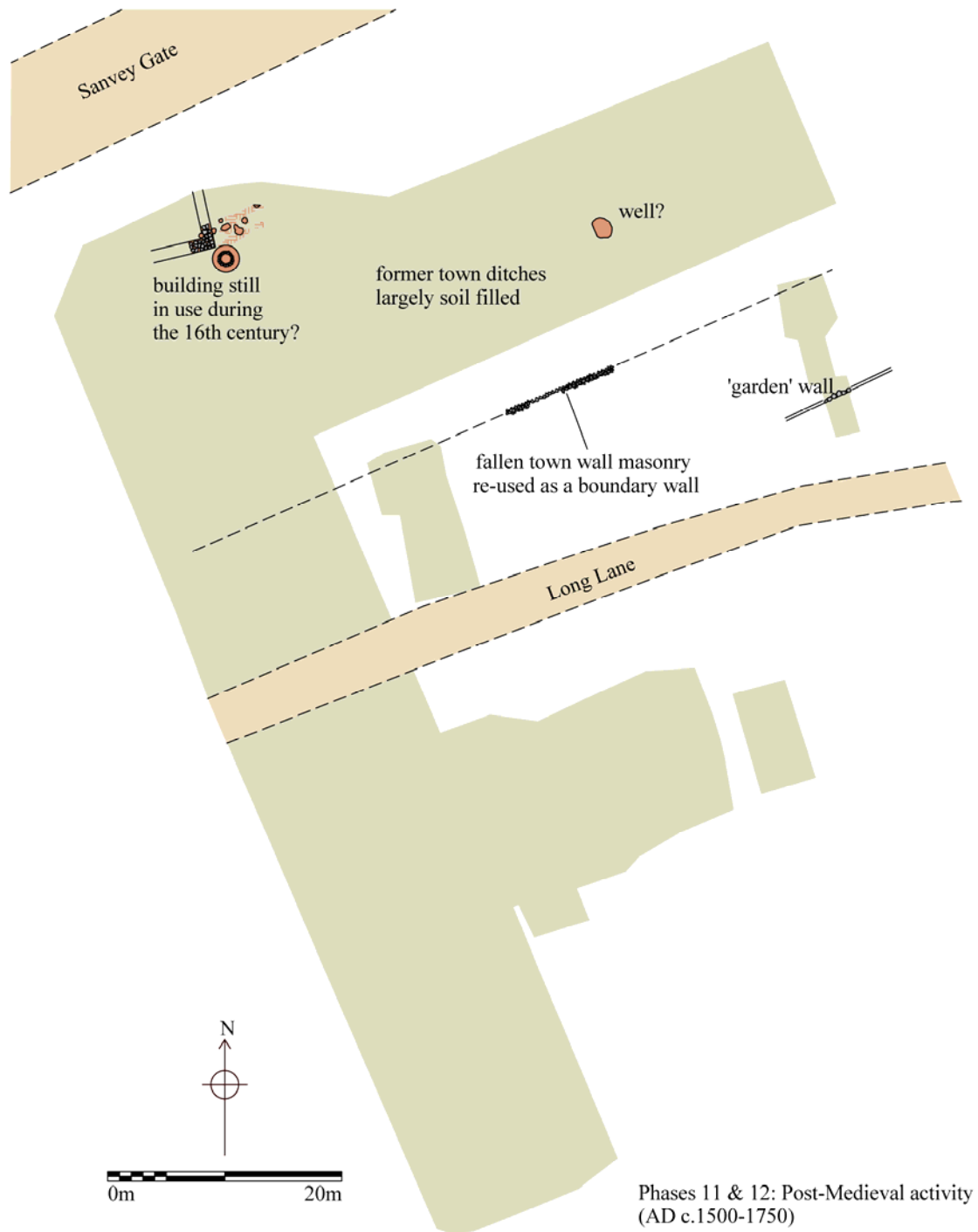


Fig. 69 Phase 11 & 12 (AD 1500 – 1750), interpretive plan.

Part of the collapsed town wall (see Phase 8) was reused as a boundary feature, context (1285), separating plots of land that fronted on to Sanvey Gate and Olive Hill (Long Lane) respectively to the south (Fig. 57). The town wall here had collapsed forwards on to its face, and one fragment alone of this wall was some 4.75m long. It stood to a 'height' of 1.15m and had five of the original courses surviving, but this is almost certainly part of a much larger section of collapse as a comparable fragment context (1306) was observed 3.2m to the west, the latter a 1.8m long section (with three original courses surviving). These stretches of collapse were separated by a 'makeshift' infill of rubble (contexts 1304, 1714) to maintain this line as a boundary. This boundary wall-line continued outside the area examined here, and this line was reused and respected right through to the modern period, just 1.5m north of the original town wall-line. In the 17th century it was recorded that "ye walls now are only to secure gardens" (Billson 1920, 205), and the town wall as a boundary feature was still visible into the 20th century (R. Clark pers.

comm.). Probable patched fragments of the town wall were also used as a property boundary nearby to the south-east adjacent to Churchgate (Clarke 1952).

South of the line of the town wall by 4.9m and sitting directly on Roman rampart deposits was a line of large granodiorite stones (context 550). These were seen in one small area and the stones were a single stone's width (some 0.5m wide) running east-west and parallel to the alignment of the defences. They did not appear structural and may in fact be a garden feature, probably of post-medieval or even modern date.

North of the collapsed town wall-line and cutting the infilled town ditches, was feature [1119], which produced some post-medieval pottery. This was recorded at the base of the town ditch sections and is almost certainly the base of a well based on its depth of 2.8m below current ground level. Little other activity is attested on site which tends to confirm the historical accounts that much of the site area was given over to orchards and small-scale agricultural use in gardens.

Discussion of Phases 11-12

As elsewhere in the town the broad line of the defences was fossilised into later periods, however the line at Sanvey Gate is interesting because it was the collapsed wall, not an in situ feature that was respected. Here the line demarcated the rear of properties that fronted on to Sanvey Gate. The evidence supports historical references that the land was not intensively worked or occupied in this phase.



Fig. 70 Phases 11 (red) & 12 (blue), feature contexts.

PHASES 13-14: EARLY MODERN AND 20TH CENTURY PERIODS (1750 AD - PRESENT)

Fig. 71, Fig. 72

Summary of Phases 13-14

Initially in the modern period little activity other than gardens away from the frontages, but industrial activity indicated on site with gradual infill of terraced properties between factory buildings. 20th century slum clearance, with pre-fabricated factory buildings supplanting the residential buildings into modern times.



Fig. 71 Phase 13 (AD 1750 – 1900), general historical plan, cf. Fig. 6.

Pottery and clay pipe fragments were recovered of the early modern phase (1750-1900) during the excavations on site, from both features and the garden soils. During this period map evidence indicates

that the area started largely as orchards and gardens with housing largely restricted to the Sanvey Gate frontage only (Constable and Williams 2002). Here too were some empty frontage plots, but these were infilled in the 18th and 19th centuries, and away from the frontages infill was also dense, and including residential and factory developments. This is the pattern for the north-east quarter of the historic core of Leicester. Brick houses with slate roofs were constructed along Sanvey Gate and Burgess Street, the latter comprising smaller two-storey terraced dwellings in comparison to some of the more wealthy plots on Sanvey Gate (Constable and Williams 2002). This high density housing was also built along the now lost streets of Durham Street and Olive Street which crossed the central area of site east-west and north-south respectively. Many properties were of substandard construction and unhealthy places to live in, with inhabitants often sharing properties with animals and there were serious issues with public health and sanitation. Not all were completely squalid in nature though. Tom Barclay writing in 1895 described the properties in a court to the rear of a large chemist's shop at the junction of Sanvey Gate and Craven Street as 'a surprise for their cleanliness and bright patches of garden' (Newitt 2009).

In the east of the site, a saw mill is known from historical accounts but all trace of this was removed by later development, and although marked (with a travelling crane) on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (1885), it had certainly been demolished prior to the 2nd Edition 25" map of 1902. The saw mill was in part replaced by the Mosan Mills building in the north-east of the development area, which was constructed between 1885 and 1898, whereas the Corella Works (the Pedura Works) to the south-west is slightly later (c.1915; Coward 2004, 2005). The Corella Works is known to have replaced some terraced dwellings on site, although other dwellings survived around it until well after the Second World War (ibid.), when they were demolished as part of the slum clearance scheme in Leicester. Both factories considerably affected archaeological deposits on site. During the excavations it was observed that most of the dwellings on Burgess Street had been cellared, which truncated any earlier activity along this frontage. Additionally these had backyard privies and water tanks which caused some truncation. It is likely that the dwellings on the Sanvey Gate frontage were cellared too, but except for in the west of site these buildings were largely beyond the edge of the site and under the modern roadline where it has been widened towards the junction with St. Margaret's Way. The most recent land-use and layout prior to demolition consisted of factory sheds in the north-west of site (adjacent to the Sanvey Gate frontage), and a hard standing area (car parking) to the south of this.

Discussion of Phases 13-14

Increasing intensity of building occurred through these phases, with a mixture of high density housing and industrial development. While much of the housing would have affected buried deposits, this was largely outside the site area on the former frontages and now under widened roadlines. Additionally the cover of later medieval and post-medieval 'garden' soils provided some protection for deeply buried deposits from these ephemerally founded structures. The terraced dwellings were demolished during the slum clearances when they were seen as encouraging unhygienic living standards. The majority of truncation of earlier deposits actually took place on site due to large scale late 19th and more recent industrial activity.

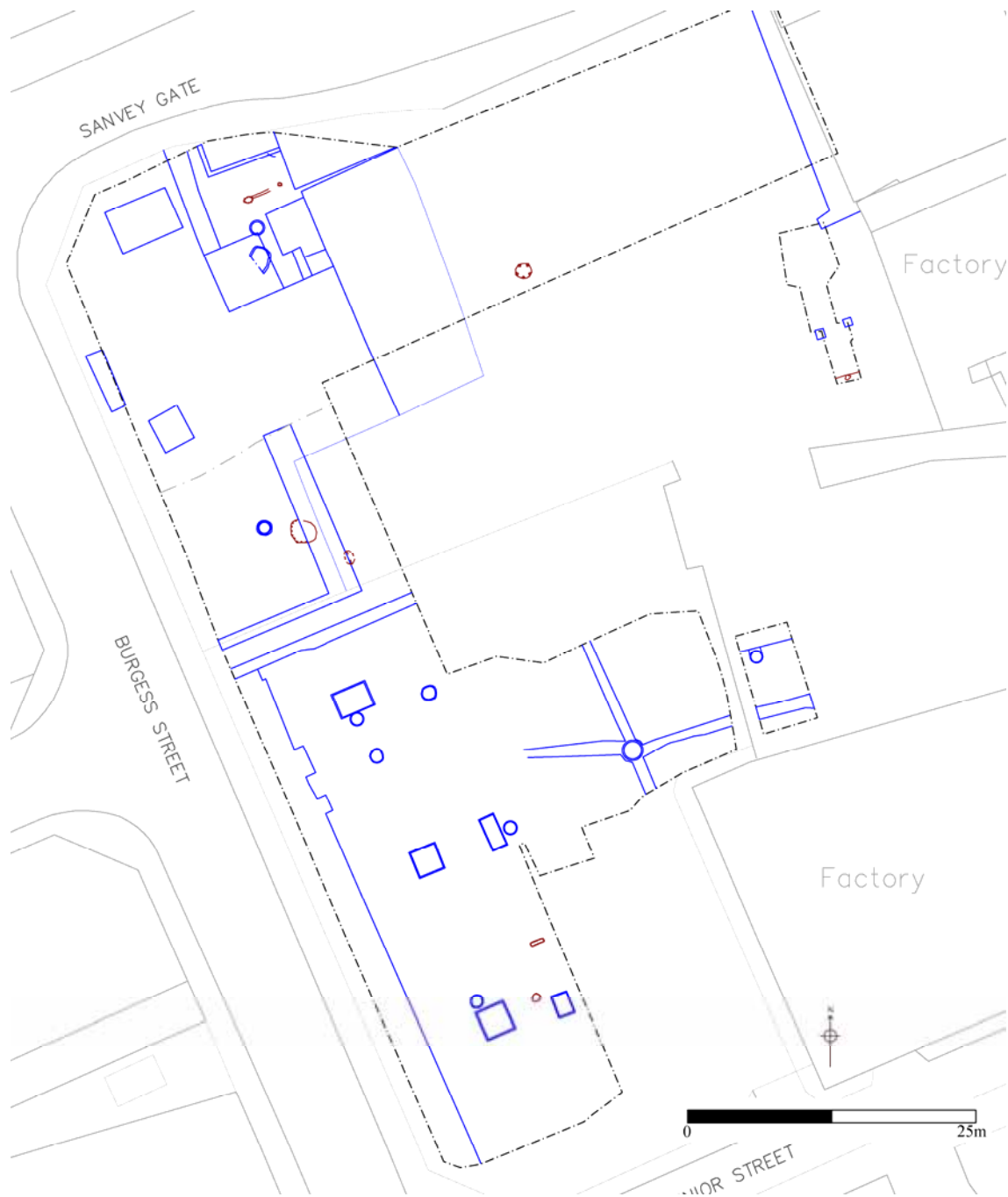


Fig. 72 Phase 13 (red) & 14 (blue), modern features.

GENERAL SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

As on the majority of Leicester sites, there was little evidence for pre-Roman activity, other than finds from chance losses. Initial activity dates to the second half of the 1st century, and although the dating evidence is somewhat inconclusive, certainly indications are that the earliest activity may date to *c.*50-75 AD rather than later. This early activity took the form of timber structures which were sited either side of large linear ditch features. The linear features may indicate an earlier town boundary as there is evidence that they continued beyond the line of the later defences. Interestingly the linear alignment was later absorbed into the street grid indicating that at least here the alignment of the grid has an early origin.

In the 2nd century, the alignment was maintained with a north-south street and boundary ditches, with buildings were constructed either side in what became *insulae* V and VI. The westernmost of these buildings was stone-founded and almost certainly associated with the early masonry structures to the west on the Vine Street site. The structure in *insula* VI is a chance fragmentary survival of clay-walled

construction, significant in itself but isolated here due to the limited scope of the development work in this area. By the mid 2nd century the street was metalled and roadside walls added. The northernmost edges of the *insulae* appear to have been demarcated with a post-built boundary and ditch feature, and towards the end of the century these were replaced or enlarged to become part of the defences. The initial defences of earth and timber survived in a partial state on site, adding information about their construction to that gained previously. Unfortunately, due to later reworking and then dismantling of the defences, little new evidence has come for dating the actual construction sequence, although an earlier Roman date for the town ditches has been confirmed. Further early ditches may survive on the defensive circuit. Due to this reworking of the defences little construction evidence was forthcoming for the (presumably) later town wall and interval tower, the latter a unique find so far in Leicester. Between these structures and the urban area proper and perhaps actually demarcating the defences, was a series of features also without parallel as of yet in *Ratae*. Here a larger boundary ditch and a substantial wall superseded fairly quickly the earlier ditch and post-line. Activity outside the defences was absent after their construction. Also by the 3rd century, no occupation activity could be related to the stone building in *insula V*, and the large amount of building materials in nearby pit fills suggests that it may have been demolished around the middle of this century. Meanwhile east of the street, in the adjacent *insula VI*, a large stone building of high status was built suggesting a different course of development to *insula V*. In the later Roman period the nature of urban occupation activity is hard to define, as whilst material of this date did occur in pit fills it is not possible to relate this to any structural activity on site. Meanwhile the defences probably had the interval tower added in the 4th century and the outer town ditch was recut and modified at this time into a wider flat-bottomed feature.

In the immediate post-Roman period, activity adjacent to the probably partially surviving north-south street indicates several timber structures of early Saxon date, the first such evidence from within the town walls. These are potentially significant structures, interestingly well away from the core of the post-Roman town and so perhaps their proximity to the street grid is not fortuitous as this may have provided access around the town. Some Saxo-Norman activity is also suggested from pits, perhaps originally associated with structures lost from the nearby frontages. The town defences probably survived through these periods in a gradually more dilapidated state. It is the medieval period before there is evidence for the area being more intensively occupied again and for the defences being reworked. Work on the defences most likely included the inner ditch being recut whilst the outer was infilled, perhaps being deliberately backfilled. Robbing of parts of the town wall, its foundations, and other Roman structures took place throughout the medieval period. The collapse of a large stretch of the town wall in the medieval period might actually be attributed to the 1173AD sack of Leicester, but the collapsed wall was retained as a rather ephemeral boundary structure in later phases. Both inside the town and in the suburban area just beyond the line of the defences, domestic activity is indicated including pitting and construction of stone wells presumably backyard activity from the Sanvey Gate, Burgess Street and Torchmere frontages. The line of the latter follows the lee of the defences, and beside it a single burial was placed, possibly an outlier from St. Michael's churchyard just to the south-west. Later medieval and post-medieval activity continued on the Sanvey Gate frontage in the form of timber and stone-founded buildings, behind which the town ditches were largely infilled. Away from the frontages the evidence indicates gardens or small-scale agriculture prior to the industrial revolution when the area was again redeveloped, with factories and terraced housing. However, even into the 20th century, the fragmentary collapsed town wall survived as a boundary wall at the rear of the Sanvey Gate properties.

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Abbreviations

BAR	British Archaeological Report
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
TLAHS	Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
ULAS	University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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Front cover: The Roman town wall, fragment displaced from original position (Phase 8 or later) and reused as a boundary feature



Cover: The Roman Town Wall, collapsed in antiquity but reused as a boundary feature at Sanvey Gate.

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